



U. S. ARMY

Dear Mr. Raden —

Several days ago, a young Chinese boy came into the hospital, who had had a rather exciting adventure. He escaped from Singapore when the Japs were hot on its heels, then he went to London, and from there to New York. He worked in a restaurant for a couple of years and then was inducted into the army. His command of English is very limited. I got acquainted with him one day because I had to do some translation work for him, rather I should say, some interpretation work. A few days later he told me something about his life, and one evening, I do not know how he came about it, he told me some strange tales about China.

In some ways, these two stories are no different from some of the others I collected. I thought perhaps you may be interested in them.

Because I have Amie on my hand, I thought it would be good practice to see, if after

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all these years, I am able to
write again or not.
The stories follow—

In the olden days, years gone
by, there lived in a certain
village a poor family, ~~a kindly~~^{a kindly}
man, his simple wife, and a
daughter four years old. His
simple farmer tilled his land,
gathered the harvest, and in
all his years, nothing of importance
or unexpected had ever disrupted
his daily and calm existence. He
was contented with his three meals
a day, his small but adequate
home, his faithful wife, but there
was one thing that he wished above
all, and that was to see a
son.

It seems, therefore, that both
he and his wife accepted it as
a will of the heavenly Gods,
that when the years ~~go~~^{went} by and
no sons ~~were~~^{were} born, that there
would be no one to carry on
their name and pay respect to
their bones after they passed
away.

It was, then, ~~is~~^{was} the burden
which hung heavy in the farmer's

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heart as he went on with his daily task.

Now on one certain day in the month in which ^{the} hot weather was everywhere, and men who worked in the fields had to stop every now and then to rest, lest they could not work on this kindly one, the farmer, who was walking leisurely homeward when he heard the loud wailing of his wife who was sitting on the doorstep of the neighbor's ^{house} next door.

When she saw the father of her daughter coming, she got up quickly, and just as soon as he was within hearing distance, she said to this man of hers, "The evil we fear to come is come at last. This one and that one, our neighbors' man and woman are dead." She would have gone on had not at this moment the little boy child cried out from the little wooden cradle where he was.

Now for many days before, the neighbors, man and wife, had been stricken ill with a disease

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that had raged rampant over the land. Day they had to lie in bed, and each passing day, their faces became a little more yellow, their pulses a little more weak, until this day when the farmer's wife went over to find them dead.

As if it was the will of the heaven this evil disease touched the child not at all.

So ~~now~~ therefore this day, with the child alone and unperused for, what else could the farmer do but to take him to his home.

"Perhaps it is heaven's will that this boy child be cared ^{for} by us," he said to the mother of his daughter. He who had longed so much for a son now had one, although not of his own flesh and blood.

This boy child had seen one more summer than the girl child, for its father had a fertile woman, and like a seed quickly planted in rich earth, the child had grown fat and heavy in his mother's womb, from the very first moment.

And so the seasons went by two times and two times again.



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From the first moment I had the farmer held the boy child in his arms, he knew that here was one good and wise for the child was firm and chubby, and ^{his} eyes were bright like the clear waters of the lake.

And the farmer was not wrong, for although he was one who had not had any book learning, he knew that such an one as the boy child was destined to be a scholar.

Therefore, almost from the first moment, the child was sent to an old tutor who dwelled several miles down the road. Of it never & for a most unusual occurrence that never failed to happen each day, the farmer would not have been so sure that he had a son, brighter and wiser than most others, and this was that each day before any of the students could reach the little shack for whatever learning they could get, they had to cross a little running stream, not narrow enough to jump over, yet not wide enough to necessitate a boat to traverse it, ~~but each one would have to~~ ^{and each one would have to} ~~the shack~~ and although the stream was

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not deep enough to be dangerous,
all who crossed it wetted their
feet and shoes.

Now it came to pass that
when the boy child crossed the stream,
each time, without fail, a large
flat stone would float up, and
he crossed over to the other side
without getting wet at all.

Such an occurrence as this could
not but cause a great commotion
in the village, and many times
while coming back from his lessons,
the fathers and mothers of the other
children would gaze at this wonder
child, and yearn in their hearts
for such an one as he. For he was
one of great beauty too, with black
heavy brows and lashes that swept
upwards, and eyes that shone brightly,
and thin but intelligent lips.

Many times the village maids
would gaze and stare at him, and
yearn in their hearts that they
might have such an one^{like}. Now this
beauty was such that men and women
both would look and look again
if by chance he passed them by.

And so the years went on.

Now during all these passing years
there was one thought that kept
lingering in the farmer's head, and
this was that he wished to pair
his daughter to this foster son

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of his. Well was it that he did think so thus, for in her silent ways the maid had hoped and prayed for this, and the foster son had one day noticed, that although the maid was not as pretty as others in the village, yet she was sturdy and firm in flesh and would be the right one to satisfy his cravings of the flesh. Yet he was not too open in his affection for her, because living in the house so many years, he had grown to treat her like a little sister.

One spring night therefore, the farmer, sitting in the doorway of his humble home knew that the moment was come, for it was such a night that men could not but feel the stirring within themselves and must find a satisfaction in some woman or maid, lest they be unhappy and heavy in ^{their} hearts. He approached this wonder land whom the gods had blessed and said therefore, "you have grown of age to take unto yourself a wife. My daughter is one who tends to duty and obeys the rules of proper conduct. If you but give the word, then the matter will be settled."

⑧ - The young one gave consent at once, for he too had felt the ~~the~~ stirring deep within him and known that he must find expression soon.

- I know it was that two became one, and out of this oneness, another came, a child. And husband and wife, grandfather and grandmother, and the little grandchild were as happy as could be.

The old man and old woman never failed to burn incense to the Earth-god all these years, for it was their belief that that it was he who had brought all these miracles and brought them all their joy and happiness.

All this time the young husband never failed to continue with his book learning, for deep in his heart he wished to become a person of fame and fortune, and he studied unendingly toward this end.

One day, it was announced, a new magistrate was to be chosen, for the former one was old and wicked and had ravaged the countryside with his greed for riches, and the populace had risen and taken his last breath out of his wicked body, and this day, an examination was to be held in the city courts, and whoever shall pass with the highest marks shall then be adjudged the new city magistrate.

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Now there was no doubt in the mind of the young one that he could pass and be the one to rule over the city and countryside. In the old farmer's heart, too, there was much confidence, for had not the gods been kind to him year after ~~year~~ year; the crops had been plentiful, and there had been no sickness or disease in the family.

So this day then, the young scholar started out for the city, and the members of the household stood by the doorway and bade him farewell.

Weeks went by, and on one certain day when the young scholar began to doubt and worry whether he passed or not there came a running messenger to the door. The poor farmer received the message, and calling the young one to him, he gave him the message.

Joy it was all over the jubilant village when it was found out that not only did the young scholar become the new magistrate, but he was so far ahead in his tests that there was no one even close enough to even challenge his position.

There now came over the villagers near and far such

justice and peace as had never ^{been} seen
before, in the days of their fathers,
and their fathers' fathers before them.

Supreme peace reigned all over
the land, and then like a black
cloud that drifted over the sky,
an evil that saddened the hearts
of young and old alike were felt.
Then it was announced that the
new magistrate was stricken ill
because he was striving so hard
to clear all the evil laws and
proclamations of the former admin-
istration, and because he worked from
early dawn until late at night,
and took not time to eat or
sleep, he now fell ill from this
heavy burden of his work.

— Then and with the people
came, and this one brought a piece of
beef, and that one some fresh fruits
and vegetables, as a token of their
respect. And the magistrate, now
weak and weak, came out from
his inner councils and thanked
them all, and bade them return
to their daily work.

On a sad gray day, his
energy entirely spent, the magis-
trate finally drew one last
breath and was mortal no
more.

— For many days thereafter



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everyone went around in a daze, for none could believe that such a man, one so kind and righteous could really go like a sudden gust of wind.

For one so good and true, there was but one thing to do, and that was to prepare ~~an~~ ^a huge and elaborate funeral as such an one deserved. Therefore, on the day when the dead one was to be laid at rest a public holiday was declared, and every one went to his heart's content, lest his neighbors be watching and say he was not doing his duty towards one so kind and good.

Now for one so good and kind, there could be no death, and as if to prove this there arose from the grave of the dead one a small sturdy tree. This tree grew and grew as the seasons passed, and there blossomed forth from it, flowers so huge and magnificent that all who passed by gasped in bewilderment and wonder that anything so beautiful could be possible in this mortal earth.

Amazing, too, was that rain or shine, winter or summer, the

blossoms never disappeared.

And each time that the people passed and gazed upon this tree, they ~~are~~ ^{were} reminded of ^{the} good and kindly magistrate, and thus it was that the good kept forever in the memory of everyone. By sprouting forth this tree of everlasting flowers, and ^{the} people never forgot ~~that~~ him at all.

Here's the second one —

— A simple country lad one day was strolling in the woods when he came upon a strange looking man sitting on the edge of a pond. This strange man was fat and lazy-looking, with a face grinning all the time, and eyes continuously twinkling with hyssic stare.

Now this simple lad could not help ~~but~~ be drawn to such a merry old soul, and he approached therefore and said "Old man, and why are you so happy today?" At that the old one only grinned a little wider and kept waving his hands to bade the lad ^{come} nearer. And the lad did, and when he was near enough, he saw to his horror that a great sudden change had come over this fat one.

On each of the merry eyes, now the sockets shot out tongues of flicking fire that leapt and



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jumped in wild confusion. The wide grin had now changed to an expression of one who craved and relished the human flesh. Although the lad was a simple person, yet he was quick enough to grasp that there was something strange and queer, and, nimbly evading the gripping fingers of the fat one, he raced toward the open road.

So frightened in his ribs was he that not a word did he mention to anyone. And he would have forgotten this peculiar event if not one day a young mother came shouting through the village streets that her little babe had been grasped by a fiery looking man who seemed to have suddenly emerged from the pond while she was washing her clothes. And when she looked again, she said, not a sigh nor sound could she hear, and from the pond, therefore, only bubbles arose, and nothing could be seen of man or babe.

And the simple lad when he heard this now took courage and boldly said to all, "And it was I who saw it first." And one and all crowded around him then to

to hear his tale.

When he finished, the village elders shook their heads and said, "A las! If only we had known this sooner, perhaps this tragedy would not have occurred. It is the evil pond devil who has claimed the little babe."

Legend had it in that particular hamlet that there dwelt in every pond nearby an evil pond devil and whenever it became hungry it would come up and draw ~~the~~ any human flesh to his home beneath, where he leisurely devoured it.

Now there was one thing that the pond devil was afraid, and this was the blood of any dog. Once it saw it he would remain hidden and would not come up to bother the populace.

Therefore the village elders commanded that a dog be killed and its blood be dispersed in the pond where the babe was lost. This then was done. From then on, the pond devil never reappeared by any means.



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Dear Mr. Radin -
The following composition is
not even a story, nor a sketch, and
the only appropriate word I can
think of for it is that it is only
a mood, a feeling, something I felt
for one short moment, then felt no
more.

I'm sending it to you, because
you may be interested in it.
The title of the piece is called
"Insomnia." You'll understand why, I
think.

Insomnia

In that unfathomable moment,
that short period between sleep and
awakefulness, he, the patient, felt
for one fleeting moment an unlettered
pang of passion and longing, and he
felt strange and lost in the whiteness
of the room, so white, so whitish white,
what a shudder of frigid coldness
tingled up his back. Red, red roses,
how much like the living surging blood
that gushed and swirled in two even
sinks down his yellow nose that
morning when they brought him in.
And as he stared into the ebony
blackness, and saw the silent forms
of sleeping figures, how strange, how
strange, it seemed to him that

② living, breathing men, so alive and moving, this early morn were now so silent and so dead in trance-like solidity - they slept in peace or sorrow or joy. He did not know, for how could one pierce into the inner, conscious of ~~these~~ ~~these~~ souls.

In peace they sleep, they sleep, they sleep, the silence seemed to sing, and then the loud sound of snoring and coughing clashed and clanged against his sensitive ears. The shattered silence fell and drummed against the floors and walls, and faded down the corridors. An echo returned so loud, so clear, and then the slamming of a door, the slow eastward drift of a withered leaf, the sudden glint of blue-white light surged and floated around him came.

Around and around, a sound, a sound, a sound. Red red roses, so bloody red, so terrifying black and black. And the white white walls, so clear, so bare, how I like to sleep, to sleep, he said.

Drowsiness whirled across the shadow of night, and from afar the soft singing of lullabies crept and played along the fringes of his ears. It came from Medford town, it came, he was sure. From Medford, Medford, it did come.

Oh Lord, Oh God, he heard it once again, how it aches me to see all those soldiers and boys sinning

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inspected?



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and going to the devil. He could now see the exhilarated beauty of that woman in the soft-blue dress. How white and kind that face appeared bathed in holy aural light. Ah, yes, the silly were continued what they need is the Lord. How I wish God could save them. If they understood God, they'll stop drinking, and smoking and sinning. God is so wonderful, so wonderful.

The voice receded, the figure blurred, the aural light conceded to the blackness of the night, and back to Medford town it went, it went.

Now he saw that the blackness was not so black. Was it, that dawn was coming slow but sure? Black and white, and white and black. Red red roses so red, so black.

Pictures, scenes, faces, all, blurred and clear came forward then. Out of the misty coming dawn, he saw a pair of false teeth in a cup of milkiest looking water. He found himself chuckling softly over a pair of false teeth, why he did not know.

Out of the emptiness there came to him, a glaring page in blue-black ink. Is there nothing you like

④
in Oregon, it said, Keep your chin up
pal, you are not alone, and I shall
write to you again. How well he remem-
ber that particular face, so sharp,
so cleared, chiseled in stone-like
severity, then melted slowly before
his eyes.

And now he knew that he was
lost and alone, turning his weary
face to the wide open sky, and
waiting for sleep that restful sleep
to come just once.

Sleep, sleep sleep. he counted again
and again, but there was no sleep,
no sleep, alas, for him, there was no
sleep.

The murmur of a thousand seas
that surged and foamed and hissed
and splashed, quietly, quietly, settled
at last.

Dawn began at his fingertips
and slowly it ran up his hands
and face and he could feel the
grayness of the early light. A
cold breeze danced across his face,
like the lithe naked body of the
bubble dancer in Shanghai Club.

San Francisco, my Christown, he
thought, whiskey sour, gin and rye,
Lion's Den and Skyroom bars. Pale
blue light came down like rain,
and dancers twisted and turned
and jumped. A clashing of a gong

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and from a hidden corner a figure emerged, naked, pure, so lovely too. What beautiful sharp and pointed breasts, he suddenly remembers now, such exquisite curves, so white, so clean, and he reached out to find it crumbled into nothingness.

Am I awake or asleep, he said. It was suddenly cold, he felt, as he remembered the phenobarbital. The little capsule pill, he had fingered the night before. He was afraid to take it then, for fear he might not wake up again. But he did swallow it and now he remembers the bitter taste.

Suddenly he yawned and stretched, and twisted and turned in bed. Oh, how tired, how tired, I am, he said. Is sleep coming to me at last? Perhaps?

Morning is like a cold winter sheet, afternoon is like a shot of whiskey, evening is like a funeral procession. Night is like a poignant heartache. Morning, afternoon, evening, night. A lot is time but a moment, a space, an interlude. The mountain crumbled, the sea waves pound against the rocky shores, and tides and typhoons hurled and

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mired across the land of sleeping men.
Out of the morning fit came, cold
and white like platinum hair, that letter
that said, Have you found someone you
love? Time is short you know. And
when you go across, it will be too late?

But what is hate or love or lust?
A feeling, a sensation, a subjection.
Something gotten and forgotten. A kiss, a sigh,
an embrace. A virgin maid, a girl, a whore?
Men-like beasts who killed and coated
red black blood that flowed and swelled
and gushed and splashed across the thousand
seas.

What is life and death to him,
Therefore, as he lay across the bed
and thought. Life is death, and death
is life, shall he come back again
once more. Once more?

And sleep is but a dream, a
trance, something come and gone like love
is late!

An eye, a face, a leg, a hand,
floating slurring before him came.
Medford, Oakland, Monterey, too.
San Francisco's Chinatown, ah, how I long
for you!

White and black, and black and
white, blurred and melted into
molten rivers of surging vibrations.
Like the plucking of a guitar, the
rubbing of a violin's ^{string}, sounds and waves
combined and flowed into channels
of peaceful sleep.

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His eyelids grew heavy, his head was clear. Red red roses, so dear, so clear. So it that sleep has come to him at last. Sleep has come to him at last.

Perhaps -- Perhaps.
Sleep at last.

Best -
Jon

P.S. - Frankly, - I almost tore the whole mess up when I reread it. It sounded so crazy that I wonder how I ever could have written it in such a manner.

Perhaps you may find it worthwhile. I don't know.

Tell me your frank opinion of it.

Sept 8 - 1943

12:15 P.M.:

Dear Mr. Radin -

It is extremely hard to determine exactly just what I can tell or not tell in a letter, especially now that I am in India, in a theatre of operations. However, I shall try just to tell you what I think can be written, and hope that this letter will reach you without any deletion whatsoever.

I know for a fact that there's very little I am allowed to say about my trip to my present destination, although I think that it is permissible for me to tell you that I did have the fortune to see several of the largest and well-known cities of the world. One of them is one of the cleanest, modern, and well-known for its beauty, and ^{one of the most} famous city in the world. Agra is one of the district I have seen so far.

Not only cities, but I have seen land, people, scenes and sights that have etched a great impression upon my mind. Of all the different countries and continents which I passed on the way, India is the one country that is the most picturesque, the most different from the United States. It is also the most tragic.

Tragic Land probably in the world today. The tragedy of India is not in its terrific weather, the hot scorching sun, the unceasing rain, the monsoons; nor is the tragedy of India in its predominant unsanitary conditions which are prevalent everywhere; the danger of malaria, typhoid, dysentery, and all other tropical diseases, but the real tragedy of India to my mind, is in its suffering human population.

What I have seen while travelling in my own country is nothing to what I have seen in India. It is difficult to imagine, even in a poor country such as this, that conditions of wholesale starvation of great masses of people can exist to so great an extreme.

In the cities, towns, villages, almost without exception, everywhere, the starving natives, some of them no more than just a feeble walking corpse, would crowd around us wherever we stopped, holding up their cans or small baskets so that we could throw them pieces of bread, or whatever food we have. No matter how small a morsel, it is eagerly grasped and thankfully received.

I doubt if there's anywhere else on earth where a person can come into contact with so many varieties of deformities as here in India. To mention a few I've seen.

There is the little boy who crawls
around on all four extremities, with
a face and body like a monkey. He
scuttles around faster than a human
being can walk and as soon as he
acquires some food he would crawl
away like an animal and gulp his
food down in large pieces.

Then there's the old man who propels himself with two bamboo poles. Apparently, he is one of those men who wilfully inflicted upon himself an ailment or some trouble, so that his profession in begging can become more effective. This particular man has lost all power of strength in his legs. His legs are drawn up so that the knees of both thighs are touching his chest. Both legs have lost ^{all} motivation and feeling. They are nothing more than bones covered with a layer of wrinkled skin.

The upper half of this strange man is completely normal. A face with regular features, strong & sturdy arms, well rounded chest. But the lower



half of him is completely shrouded and makes him look like a combination of a half-alive - and half-dead man. Two bamboo poles, one under each arm, form crutches with which he is able to move around. And when he does move, he gives the impression that a violent electrical vibration is shaking him on the inside.

I'll never forget one scene I saw one day. I guess these two are father and daughter, because they looked so much alike. Both of them had funny hair-do. The hair was long and tied into a firm knot on top of the head.

The man and the girl had regular, fine sensitive features, despite their apparently starving conditions. But from the front view they presented a most peculiar sight. The legs curved and formed a perfect circle. In other words, both of them were walking on the ankles, while the bottoms of their feet were turned up, forming the spot where the bottoms of the circle met.

There is still another scene which if I had not seen with

my own eyes - I would call incredible if someone else were to tell it to me.

At a small inland town where we stopped one day, a large group of native women came rushing up like a surging wave. They were all young, most of them carrying small babies in their arms. Their faces had bright staring eyes, thin necks, bloated stomachs and very thin arms and legs, a perfect picture of malnutrition and starvation. The women are slender, with a sensuality that is rather uncommon.

Some of the women had rings on their noses, but all of them wrapped their bodies with a loose, thin cloth, and several of them either deliberately or unconsciously revealed their breasts in full view.

There was one particular female who stood out of the crowd. She had very sensual and wicked eyes, and a voluptuous air all about her. She was standing not far from we were, smiling frequently, holding a small tin can in her hands. Her bosom was revealed unashamedly, and every now and then she would bring her hands up and squeeze her breasts lightly.



- She seemed to know a ^{few} words in English and she kept saying, "Two Annas, ~~but~~ annas." Quite out of curiosity, I threw ^{her} a two anna piece, and before I knew what happened, she brought her hands quickly to her breasts and with a tight squeeze she squirted a steady stream of milk out. It has started an immediate riot. By this time, every soldier that had a two anna piece was throwing it to her. The woman got bolder and came a little closer. Bedlam broke out, and streams of human milk came from all directions. One unfortunate soldier (maybe fortunate, too) got the full impact of a stream of milk right in his face.

Now, where else except in India can anything like this happen. After seeing this, I can expect to see pink elephants any day now.

There is much that is strange and unusual in India today. For instance at the place where we ~~are~~. Here we see the old and the new. Modern streamlined buildings are but a stone's throw from mud huts and straw houses. Autos run side by side with carts

drawn by small mules and - horses. We see clean paved streets, and also the filthiest dirt road. The well-fed - lines side by side with the emaciated, starving. I have never ^{seen} such an unusual combination of two extremes to such a great extent anywhere else.

The majority of the Indian population, I guess about ninety percent of them, run around - barefooted. They walk on stones, dirt, and rock with as much comfort as those with shoes on. The typical habilitment of the men is a shirt and a very light loose-fitting trousers, usually of white cloth. No shoes, no socks. A great deal of the men have cloths or turbans tied around their heads, some of them are in dazzling bright colors, - but usually they are white. Quite a few men go bare-headed, and many of them carry umbrellas, rain or shine, everywhere they go.

Despite the typical garments of the average native (there is sometimes a great incongruity in dress. It is that unusual sometimes to see a native with a turban on his head, a smart cut jacket (English made), loose-fitting trousers (native style), and leather shoes.

Or all other odd combinations, very comical (to us anyway) and very bizarre.

— There is one peculiar thing about the majority of these natives which is rather strange. Most of them look like white men with dirty faces. — The average native of India is a nice-looking fellow. He has large sensitive eyes, long lashes, straight nose, and a delicate chiseled mouth. He is slender in build, good proportion, (the starving excepted), and for his size, strong and sturdy. As far as outward appearances can be judged, they seem like a friendly and amiable race. I really think that if given an opportunity and a chance to develop its natural talent, the Indian population could really distinguish itself in whatever field it desires.

Also, there too is another side of India which is not so commendable. And this is ^{the} prevailing unsanitary and filthy living conditions which so many, especially the poorer natives, are contented with. Perhaps there is no way for them to acquire better sanitation. But I don't think it is that so much. I think that these natives

are never used to cleanliness or healthy living habits.

Even the poor whites of Caldwell and the Ookies of Steinbeck live in palaces, compared to the rat-holes which are known as houses over here. Apparently, the people eat, live, and sleep on the floor. Even the common chair and table are lacking. There is no such thing as a bed.

The callousness of mankind would be melted at the sight of the little Indian babies. Some of them are no more than just a large handful of human flesh or rather - I should say, of human skins and bones. There is a strange eerie look about a starving baby that is really terrifying. A large head, comparatively speaking, in proportion to the rest of the body, very thin and scraggy legs and arms, an extremely large bloated stomach, a neck like a pin point, and eyes very white and very big that look right into you and disrupt your equanimity. It gives a person a singular feeling of discomfort and awe.

— true, it is said that begging is an art here. There are lots of Jokers and fakes who craftily tolerate themselves in any sort of monstrosity to gain themselves of profit in the world of begging. The blind, the lame, the crippled, the deformed pass by like a nightmare thus cries for money ringing loudly in the air.

But I feel that many, or the majority of the people who are begging, are really in need of support.

I remember one morning I threw a small piece of candy — not a very thin mother. His piece of candy was about $\frac{1}{4}$ the size of my thumb. The woman was holding a baby in her arms which looked half dead.

Although the mother was starving too, she gave the whole piece of candy to the little baby, and took great delight to find the flame of life of anning in the child's eyes.

Hill Faten —
Lon

(to be continued in
next letter)

Letter #2
(continued)

Sept. 12 - 1943

Dear Mr. Radin -

India's weather is just as unique and unpredictable as its people. There's either a very hot sun, or there's no sun at all. When the sun shines, it beats down with unabated fury, and it takes more than a pig to stand under that sizzling sun - for more than half an hour. One moment the sun is shining, and unexpectedly - like a blitzkrieg, the rain comes. Sometimes it is only a slight shower which ceases as suddenly as it appears, but other times, it not only pours, it comes down like a gushing torrent. After a sudden rain like this, puddles of water appear everywhere, the ground becomes slippery, and it takes two days of continuous sunshine to really dry the ground up nice and firm.

In addition to this "lovely" weather, we have the further annoyance from malaria-carrying mosquitoes, big black flies which bother us at the precise moment, it seems, when we sit back

to relax or lie down to rest, and several varieties of strange bugs that have an uncanny ability to creep into the slightest opening in the mosquito netting which is placed over our bed.

Ants and cockroaches - here are of a super-large size. Bedbugs just about devour every one. At night sometimes the firebugs are so profuse that they are like small moving lanterns in perpetual motion.

Funny thing - animals in India have a freedom which we seldom see in the United States. They roam around the streets in complete freedom, eating, sleeping, and doing whatever they are nature dictate. Well - you know how nature acts at the most unexpected moment. To top it all off, there's no such thing as a street cleaner in India. As a result, India has a singular odor, entirely its own. It is only when one gets into the wide open fields where there are not too many animals roaming around, that it is possible to get a whiff of clean wholesome fresh air.

The terrain of India is very flat, extremely wet and soggy, and as far as the human eye

can penetrate, there is greenness everywhere. Rice fields seem to be the predominant feature in the lush landscape. Corn fields, with their stalks towering over the heads of natives, are abundant. Palm trees, banana trees are everywhere. I don't think it is an exaggeration to say that every available inch of ground where the sun and the rain can reach, there is something green growing.

In some sections of India the plants and foliage are so gigantic and dense the land seems impenetrable. There are marshes, swamps, and man-made pools everywhere.

In the farmland there is no modern machinery or implements. Water buffalo does all the hard labor work. Goats are everywhere. I have seen very little cows so far, but there are great abundance of black cows chattering in the tree tops.

Outside of the big cities, and military camps where they are absolutely necessary, there is no such thing as a paved road.

Although there is water everywhere the eye can see, there is very little safe drinking water available.

In public places all fountains where water can be procured are marked either fit to drink or otherwise.

A running fountain in a public place is really a most interesting rendezvous. Here the natives come to bath, wash their clothes, to drink and to fill up their round ornate vessels with water. I took great interest in the celerity in which a native cleans himself! I watched them ludicrously, marvelled at their alacrity, and their lacid state of mind.

Soap is a rare luxury for the natives. The usual bath or shower consists of pouring water over the body again and again and rubbing the hands firmly over the flesh.

Men and women wash the laundry in primitive ways by wetting the articles and pounding them with strong steady strokes against flat and hard surfaces. They drink water by cupping the hands, catching the water in the cavity, and letting the water run down the throat.

I noticed that tin cans are put to great use by the natives.

- 5 -

- From a receptacle for receiving alms, to a cup for drinking purposes, the tin can is worth its weight in tin or even gold. Every can thrown away by the American soldiers is eagerly picked up and treated as precious. Many times I have seen the natives enjoying their daily tiffin from the useful tin cans.

Being naturally an abstemious person, I often throw a half-filled can to some of the starving natives. In the majority of cases, the starving persons do not immediately devour whatever is thrown to them. They either put the food away in dirty pockets or wrap it in a filthy looking cloth.

Of all the natives I've seen so far there is none, I think, who has a tendency towards corpulence. Almost everyone is lean and hard and certainly not in a flaccid state.

The wonder is that people so lean and not too big of stature can do such heavy work as carrying big bags and boxes with such ease. The head is used much more often for carrying articles than

the shoulders or - Loads. Many times article upon article is piled on the head, one on top of another placed in such delicate balance and precision that the person carrying them can walk with both his hands free, without holding on to them.

The inclemencies which some of the native workers have to endure and put up with at some of the places and camps I've been, were at first rather startling. But, as Kater explained by someone who has been in India quite awhile, it is the only way to make some of the natives behave.

Prices of ordinary articles are extremely high over here. Wages are very low, compared to American Standard of living.

For instance, an American-made Parker Pen costs 75 Indian rupees or about twenty-three or twenty-four American dollars. A roll of ordinary toilet tissue paper costs about one dollar, American money.

The average laborer earns between twenty-five to thirty-five rupees per month, or about

eight to ten American dollars. In most cases, the workers have to pay their food out of this meagre pay.

Let me tell you of a small town near the first camp where we stopped at. Each day, after duty, American soldiers swarm into town, and it is really a sight to see. Souvenir shops, large and small, garish and plain, clutter the three main thoroughfares, their bright and glittering wares lavishly displayed in profusion.

The large stores usually sell everything at a fixed price, and all the wares are displayed in neat clean showcases. But the fun in buying anything is in the various bazaars which pop up in every nook and corner. There the prices of any article, ranging from a small handkerchief to a silver bracelet, are fantastic, especially to a soldier in Uncle Sam's army.

But as in all things, a person gets wise, sometimes too late. The first day I went down town I bought everything I liked and

paid whatever price it cost.
- then one of our officers warned us
not to pay more than one
third of the original price for
anything.

The second day in town - I
felt rather proud that I could
bring the merchants down at least
to one half their original
prices. But even this was too
high, - I was told.

The third day in town - I
decided to try a little experiment
just for the fun of it. There
was a hand-carved necklace which
had caught my attention at a little
shop. I priced it and found out
that the price was 12 roubles. Twenty
minutes of arguing brought it down
to five roubles. I didn't buy it.

That night - I went to about
seven places that sold a necklace
exactly identical to the one I
liked. One place the price was
25 roubles. Another place was
15. At a very small shop where
a man melts quarters and dimes
to make silver rings, I found

This necklace selling for 4 rupees.
- I bought two. - This pricing around
really helps, as you will see by the
following true incident.

When I sent my package of
souvenirs home, one of our officers,
a captain, saw the necklaces when
he was censuring the package.

"I got one exactly like this,"
he told me. "How much did you pay
for it." - I told him, 4 rupees.

"I've been gypped," (is this word
spelled correctly?) he exclaimed loudly.
He looked so surprised and bewildered.

Like him, I had been overpaying
much too much for many articles.
I guess I've learned a little about
bargaining now.

But there is much more than
bargaining I learned about the
short time I've been in India.
Next letter will tell more.

Till Later -

(To be continued)
in next letter

Jon

Letter #3
(continued)

Sept. 13-1943

Dear Professor Kadin -

The little small village town, sequestered not far from our first stopping place in India, is really quite a small place, - but due to the teeming crowd of soldiers who swarm into it each night, and to the unceasing noise and chatter of the colorful shopkeepers who keep arguing about prices of their various wares, this small town takes on a copaciousness that is entirely unnatural. As I said before in my previous letter, the larger shops sell their merchandise at fixed prices. A soldier either buys or he doesn't buy at all.

These large stores are usually the size of a fairly good size room, with glass counters neatly arranged all around the walls. The shopkeepers there are neat, courteous, and speak fluent English. Shopping in these stores is just an ordinary matter, lacking all the fun and interest of buying at the small bazaars and shops which sell everything from two to ten times its original price.

These shops are actually not shops at all; they are more like a huge cubicle, dug into a wall.

A typical bazaar shop looks like this. The floor is about two or three feet from the ground. The room or "cubicle" is about eight feet long, eight to ten feet in height and about ten feet deep. On this small space, all the articles for sale are displayed, some in a neat artistic manner, others in a heterogeneous jumble. The various merchandise is stacked, hung, or draped on the ceiling, floor, walls, or any available space. Of course, more valuable articles like watches, rings, fountain pens, are wisely placed behind small glass cases.

Lavish silk scarfs, shining tablecloths edged with glittering silver and gold thread, dazzle the eyes of all who passes. The shopkeepers of these bazaar are very interesting people to watch. They usually sit on the floor, legs crossed, dressed in bright and picturesque native costumes, and are like big moving dolls amidst the colorful setting of scarfs, tablecloths, necklaces, garments and silk. They talk good English, and have a very affable manner and mien.

An American soldier is a millionaire or a "sucker" to them. Prices rise to a fantastic level once the Yanks hit town and stay that way until they get wise, which usually is a few days, after



The first contact with the Indian way of business. By this time the damage is done! A soldier gets wise and learns how to bargain. As if by magic the shops relent and sell everything at "fixed prices."

The business district of this particular town is lively, gay, noisy and bright compared to the residential quarters. This, the living quarters of the town people, is filthy, unsanitary and resembles a crowded *tabuttori*. Despite its conditions of poverty, I am mesmerized by the utter horror of such ignominious scenes. The people, usually poor, sit or stand with a dolorous expression on their faces. I have never seen such a saturnine group of men and women in my life!

Animals, usually goats, come in and out of the house with all the freedom of the members of the household. Children, especially the small young ones, run around naked and bare.

The bodies of everyone, young and old alike are covered with layers of dirt that have eaten deep into the skin through constant years of neglect and careless attention.

Houses are mud huts or small bamboo shacks, with layers of twigs, leaves, or straw for a roof. Garbage and refuse litter the ground, and the foul odor of animals and unclean bodies pollute the air.

Every time that an American soldier walks through the poor district, he is followed by a large crowd of children, begging for money or food. If he is kind enough to donate an anna or two, then the fun begins. Like a P-38, the crowd of beggars will swoop down, some yelling, some talking, some even crying, others singing or gestulating to attract attention. A crowd like this is stubborn and refuse to be dispersed.

Usually the soldier will give away much small change, hoping that everyone will go away. This doesn't usually work. Sometimes a stubborn child clings like I don't know how, and it is necessary to be harsh to get rid of him.

There is one little trick that the little girls seem to pull on the soldiers. When a person is not conscious of it, the little girl will creep up silently, and with deft motions shine his shoes with a small hand brush, and then

she will stand up straight, smile, and hold out her hand for a tip. Nine out of ten will pay, caught in a trap like this.

General slang expressions like okay, hello, - are quite frequently heard.

Of great interest to me are the shoe makers, the silversmiths, the watch repairers. Probably the most interesting one to watch is the man who melts U.S. quarters and dimes and fashions artistic rings out of them. It takes almost an hour from the moment of melting the money to the completion of the finished ring.

This is a long and interesting process, and I shall attempt to tell you more about it in my next letter.

I could ramble on and on for pages yet, but suddenly remember I have to make up 5 a.m. in the morning.

Letter No 4 will follow very shortly.

Best —

(To be continued
in next letter)

Don

Letter #4
(continued)

Sept. 17-1943

Dear Dr. Radin -
His Indian village town the second one that I have a chance to visit, is located quite a distance from my present camp. I am now preferring to an entirely different place from the one I mentioned in my previous letter. By now, much of the novelty and interest of Indian towns have disappeared, and perhaps that is one of the reasons why this particular ^{place} lacks all the fun and glamour of the first one I visited. Then again, perhaps it is because this town is more normal and quiet, and quite a good distance away from the tragic starving sections of India.

It is a town several times larger than the one where all those colourful bazaars and shops are clustered within the confines of their main streets. But here the stores, shops, restaurants, and public places are dispersed into every street and byway, it seems.

During the one single day I spent down there, not once was I approached by anyone begging for money or food, and this in itself

was rather surprising, after the experiences I saw all along the way from the point I landed up to here.

The people here are much cleaner and more healthy looking, and as far as Indian towns are concerned, it is extremely clean. Many of the residences are of brick or cement with roofs of tin and iron, and the houses give an appearance of neatness and comfort. The streets are fairly wide, and are paved with large and small stones. Small picturesque carts, drawn by two oxen, crawl up and down the street leisurely. Animals, mostly cows now, roam and lie on front yards, lawns, and the streets, with all the ease and freedom of kings.

In this town too, I ran into many Chinese. Every one of the big restaurants are owned by them. The Chinese here speak a very peculiar dialect. It's not Mandarin but is it one of the many Cantonese dialects that I know. However, one of the Chinese men speaks good ordinary Cantonese and I did have a chance to talk a little with him.

I found out that one can get a much more vivid picture of the war over here by talking to men who had actually participated in it in the different branches. From them one learns true accurate accounts of happenings and events that never get into the newspaper or headlines. Some are tragic, almost beyond belief; others are straight account of battles and raids that had taken place previous to our arrival.

Censorship prevents my telling you more on this subject.

The men and officers of the different units I met here are very friendly and extremely talkative. It seems that there is no such thing as a military secret. Everybody talks and anyone can listen. I only wish I can tell you of my visit to a ——— near here. There I met a Sergeant from good old California.

He saw me prowling around, sticking my nose into everything within sight. That startled him. For the next three hours he took me around the ———, explained everything, and I had the unusual privilege of going inside a huge ———. It was the first time I've ever been in one, and

it was a most interesting visit. That
sergeant couldn't have told me more
if I had paid him to acquire information.
I learned more about — that day
in three interesting hours than I
ever could have learned anywhere else.

The inside of a — is very
intricate and absorbing, especially to one
who knows nothing about it. All I can
say ^{is} that it was really an experience and
an education.

I must tell you of the first dead
man I saw over here. Undoubtedly,
he was a victim of starvation. He was lying
on the edge of a main road, face upwards,
his mouth slightly open, showing some
dirty teeth, and his cheeks were sunken in,
eyes balling. A thin dirty brown shirt covered
his emaciated body. I threw a cursory
glance at the corpse at first, for the
body was pregnant with flies and bugs.
— then standing aside I regarded the
and body, fascinatedly mesmerized by
being so close to such an execrable
sight.

I saw then that the dead man
was nude from the hips down. The
legs were like two dry bamboo poles,
stiff and shrunken. The region of the
stomach between the thighs were
bloated to an abnormal size.

Perhaps the body had been lying
on the road an hour, perhaps a day,
maybe two. At any rate it couldn't

have been there very long, for there was no stench apparent.

The thing that really startled me was the fact that no one paid any attention to the body, although it was in full view of a main road. Autos, trucks whizzed by, not stopping. The natives walked close, passed by without even looking down. The only ones who seemed curious were the American soldiers, and one even took out his camera and snapped the dead man into immortality.

I can tell you no more about this incident, except ^{that} when I read the newspaper about the thousands of dead bodies they picked up in Calcutta each and every month, ~~there~~ I am reminded of this man on the road, dead and forgotten, probably better off now than when alive.

Life is certainly cheap over here. For every life that is taken away by starvation, disease, or natural causes, there is one or more to take its place, for natives here are prolific and regular.

India, to me, is a land of surprises. A great deal of what we see here, we don't see in other countries, fortunately. Much I've seen here, I would like to forget, but the rationalization of the mind, holds the scenes and sights lingering, and I doubt very much if anyone, even the most callous, could ever forget what they saw here.

once they've seen it.

How different India is from the India we read in books. We know that this is a poor country, full of filth and diseases, but until a person actually sees some of the conditions here, he cannot accurately picture the horror and the terrible living habits of the natives.

The average life of an Indian over here is twenty-seven years. What a short span for a human being to exist. But after seeing the little scrawny babies, the undernourished mothers, the human wrecks, caused by lack of sufficient and proper food, it seems like a miracle that one can exist this long, short though it may be.

Thinking back now, I don't see how anyone in America, no matter how poor he may be, can find just cause to complain about anything. No one, not even the soldiers who have never left U.S. soil, can imagine how well off and fortunate the people in America are, who are still in U.S. territory. Despite suffering and the giving up of some of the comforts of life, the American standard of living is, ^{still} so far ahead, that ^{it} is silly to make comparisons.

I only wish it were possible for me to tell you about my trip over here, how I came, what I saw, the way I felt, and the various sights and scenes of which I remember every little detail. But since this is considered as a matter of a military nature, so I understand I just can't say a word about it. 'Perhaps it is just as well that I can't. For once I got started writing about it, I think I will not be able to stop under at least 100 pages.

The fact is that while coming over on the — I started a letter, a sort of daily comment about the trip, and I was on page thirty when I landed in India.

It was at the first camp where I stopped that I learned that almost everything I've written is censorable, so that letter you will never see while this war is on, but which you will see, after this war is over, for I intend to keep it.

Briefly, I can say ^{that} this trip to India is an education, if nothing else. It takes a man to throw me half way around the world. In more than twenty years I have not wandered more than 200 miles from home, and now I have seen more in

a few weeks than I've even seen in the past.

War is a great experience, and yet in some ways, it is the worst experience for a person to go through. A person cannot help but be changed in one way or another by it. For some persons, the change is so great that it is startling. I know that I have been changed in more ways than one. Yet I think a change in everyone is inevitable.

That's one of the reasons I admire so much the persons who are entirely unaffected by anything. They are their same old happy selves, going on as if under normal conditions.

In my next letter I shall tell you about some of the people I met while I am in the army. I've about exhausted everything to talk about except that.

From the time I left home up to now, I ran across such a variety of men and women that I am even amazed that there are so many kinds of human and inhuman beings in this world.

- More Later -

(to be continued.)

Jon

Letter # 5
(continued)

Sept. 22-1943

Dear Professor Radin —

I thought that I have exhausted every available subject that is permissible to write about, but thinking back, through the interstices of the memory, many scenes come up, and it is not so much the perspicacity of the mind that remembers, but the incidents and scenes are so unique, some so humorous, some so strange, that I wonder how I fail to mention them in my previous letters.

On the broad canvas that is India on which the daily scenes are spread in vivid and colorful action, one is apt to see a part and not the whole, for it is impossible in one quick glimpse to capture completely the panorama of this Indian terrain.

But like an interesting picture India contains more than meets the eye on closer inspection. The little small scenes, the little unimportant happenings — all this and much more — this is what makes India a land of unexpected surprises.

India is not too much the
land of Kipling. He was much too
vivid in what he saw, perhaps accurately
so but what I've seen is certainly
like nothing I read. Many years ago
I remembered reading a story about
a mongoose and its fight with a
cobra snake. I had a chance not so
long ago to witness just such a
scene. And unfortunately, it was a
disappointing presentation, for it
had none of the thrills and suspense
that I expected to see in a fight
to the death duel. In any case, I
shall attempt to picture for you
what I saw.

One certain day there came into
camp an old wrinkled man and a
young boy who was holding a bullock
sack in his hands. The old one was
holding tightly to a small round
basket with one hand, and in the
other his fingers were gripping on
to a colorful handkerchief which
was bulging with many objects inside.
On his head he wore a thick
white cloth which wound around
in a circular fashion. His fingers
were thin but very flexible. His eyes
were like two large raisins.

The young boy walked slowly by the side of the old man. Then in a changing voice the old one began to sing and talk it seemed, muttering something about a fight, something about ^a snake and ^a mongoose, talking in English and poor Hindu, I think. A curious crowd began to form slowly, and like all crowds, it soon began to grow large very quick a sea of eager faces, attracted by something unusual.

The old man, with an omniscient look on his countenance, began then. He was a man, no doubt, who was wise in the ways of attracting crowds. There was hardly a trick he didn't know.

When a fairly large crowd had formed, the old man untied his colorful handkerchief. A whole mass of heterogeneous objects fell out, empty nut shells, small rolls of string, rubber balls and many other odd contraptions. Then with great dexterity, he made small objects disappear, and then made them reappear at the most unexpected places. Many of the tricks he presented I had seen before, such as the trick of the three empty nut shells, the trick of the cut string, the trick of the

small rubber balls, and many others; but I never failed to admire the great skill with which these tricks were always performed.

All the tricks is - but a prefatory introduction to the real thing, the death struggle of the cobra and mongoose. Now having gotten the eager audience into the mood, the old man then announced very quietly.

"Fifteen rupees, and then the show will start."

The onlookers had by now formed themselves into a circular ring, and the man and the young boy were in the center of the ring. The soldiers who were eager to get the action started began to throw money into the center of the ring. Others did the same, and annas and even rupee bills flew in from all directions.

The total amount of money came to approximately ten rupees, but the old man shook his head, and extended his hands for more money. But the crowd had become petulantly impatient and refused to give more.

"No money, no show," the old man said with a truculent voice.

A few of the soldiers began to grumble and maledictions, and stared imperiously at the old man.

"Just five more rupees only five more, the old magician kept saying. But no one paid any more attention to him.

One soldier who up to this time - had been standing quietly, now yelled out querulously, "you god-damned son-of-a-bitch" he shouted "What the hell more do you want? If ten rupees ain't enough - give our money back. I don't think this show is worth a ---!"

The others shouted in accord. The old man looked around him, at a loss. After all, ten rupees is ten rupees, his eyes seemed to say. He began quickly to gather the money from the ground.

"All right all right, show starts now," he said, then very carefully, he opened the top of the round basket, and from it emerged a medium size cobra, with eye-like sharp pinpoints. At the same time, the young boy untied the burlap bag from which a mongoose scrambled quickly out. The neck of the mongoose was tied with a string, a long strong one, and the young boy held firmly on to the other end of it.

The who and the who vibrated from the throats of the tense watchers. The snake, by now, had wriggled its way out of the basket and was slowly oscillating back and forth shooting its darting tongue into the air.

The propensity of some of the audience was to skirm away from too near the ring, for after all, a cobra is a cobra.

The cobra was playing its part well, swaying with a Mae Westian allure, its dashing tongue like a flaming arrow. But the poor mongoose was a disappointment. It wasn't interested in anything that was going on. This mongoose had probably killed so many snakes for exhibition purposes that the killing of this cobra now is but a routine affair.

The snake coiled and recoiled like a rubber spring, then with a lightning blow, its tongue left two red holes on the magician's fingers.

A sigh of fear resounded from the watchers. But the old one was calm and unperturbed. Watching him I wondered if this act was deliberate, and put on to make the show ~~more tense and~~ interesting. Somehow, I got that feeling.

The old man held up his hands to quiet the crowd. From his pocket he took out some pasty ointment which he smeared over the snake bite. From that moment on, the show was a dud.

Somehow I expected to see a show in which two fighters would try to get the best of each other, each one angling, waiting, fighting, staving

for the death grip. Instead what I saw was a lukewarm demonstration. It was like a prearranged fight in which one of the fighters had decided to take a fall in the first round. The monkey bore bit a vital spot on the Cobra's neck, and almost immediately the last sign of life vanished from its lambent eyes, and the long body became limp, dead. The show was over. The battle lasted not more than thirty seconds. The old man went away with a dead snake, a bitten finger, and was ten rupees richer. Thus closes another chapter in this drama of India.

There is another little scene I think you will be interested in. At a certain little village one day there passed by three little girls. All of them were under twelve, I think. Of these was this certain one in this group who stood out from the rest. She had a very light complexion, and her hair curiously enough, although dirty and stringy, had a very modern glair to it. Her eyes sparkled like expensive jewels; the way she carried herself, her walk, her body movement, had a sort of wanton quality to them. If she were older, she would be a perfect picture of a nefarious wench.

She was the leader of the group. There was no disputing that fact. She was muttering something didactically into the ears of the other two girls. Something interesting was about to happen. Then all at once the three burst into song. There was a sort of poignant painful longing in that tune, a sadness not understood but felt. While singing this girl with the bright eyes began to drum her two hands against her abdomen with a loud slapping sound, keeping in rhythm with the tempo of the song.

On, on, that song continued with a wailing plaintive tone. The three girls swayed like three authentic hula dancers.

The money came flying in from all directions at the finish of the performance.

Now there was one little, small boy who was intently watching all this, and when he saw the money pouring in at such a rate, his eyes popped like a champagne cork.

Then coming close to where the three girls were, he too started to sing, not a native song, but surprisingly enough, a South American rumba song with English words, a song taken from one of Carmen Miranda's talkies.

The little boy was now the

center of attraction. Everyone was surprised to hear a song like this, especially in a little remote place here.

The little girl with the sensuous eyes definitely did not like attention drawn away from her. She rushed up to the boy and with great celerity, she kicked him.

But the little boy only smiled and continued with his song, only going away farther from her. From that moment on, there was a personal battle for attention between the two, but the little boy was definitely the victor.

I like to write more, but an envelope can only contain so many pages.

In my next letter I shall tell you about the man in the tree, and some little odd sights I saw.

Until then —

Till the Next Letter

Gone

Letter #6

Oct. 9, 1943

Dear Dr. Radin

Before I tell you any more about India, I like to tell you now about my first glimpses of China, about all the sights, scenes, people and various interesting places I encountered, and my strange feeling of being in a section of China which before the war is considered rather remote, and the difficulty I had in trying to understand the dialect of this native province and also of the hard time in trying to get myself understood.

My very first glimpse of China convinced me that it is a much better place than India, because in comparison, it is a great deal cleaner, much cooler, fortunately, and for the first time since leaving the U.S. we get fresh fruits and vegetables, and some food cooked Chinese style. We have rice every day in combination with other foods, tea of course, and a little coffee sometimes.

First of all, I want to tell you of a ~~rather~~ large city I visited several times already. This city is a pandemonium, large crowds, busy traffic, and stores,

banks, restaurants everywhere. The banks are extremely modern in appearance and design, and contain a most propitious merging of oriental and occidental architecture. The banks are all grouped together, one next to another, as numerous as a flock of gregarious birds. The edifices too are very pleasing to the eye.

But the most modern feature here is a night club, the like of which I have never seen, even in the United States. - I never dreamt that there is anything like this, especially in China.

This club is open only to American soldiers. No officers are allowed in there. This club is surrounded on all sides by a high thick wall, giving it a secluded and intimate feeling. The first thing that catches your attention when you enter through a small partition which is part of a huge door, is a large raised up platform - right in the center of the courtyard. Tables and chairs are scattered all over it.

Here the soldiers and the dancing girls, all of them Chinese girls, spend their time kissing, petting, and all that goes with it.

The lights are brightly illuminated

and everything is revealed in full view of everybody that goes into the club, for the main club could not be reached unless one crosses through the outer courtyard.

The main room of the club which is a smooth combination of restaurant, bar, and dance hall is very similar to any San Francisco night club as far as arrangement is concerned. In the very center of the room there is a large smooth platform which is the dance floor. Six red lacquer poles, three on each side and spaced at regular intervals, give the dancing of color a very interesting and picturesque isolation.

All around the dancing platform are little small tables, some round, some square, and here the soldiers and girls eat, drink, cuddle, and be merry in full view of everyone under rather bright glowing lights.

All the girls here are extremely modern in dress and manner and some may be called quite pretty, and a couple of them ^{are} quite homely looking. Most of the girls are of from this province here, a few are from Shanghai and several from Canton. The girls are as different as the city ^{where} they come from. Here we find the real gold diggers with the shabby hips and the wicked eyes, and countless fur coats and dresses which evidently did not come from the wages they make.

Here we find, too, the gigoletti whose main purpose is to provide entertainment in any form desired. There is one ^{girl} here who may be called a good girl, - but who took the job as a dancing hostess. Because of financial conditions.

For one hundred dollar an hour these girls can be hired as dancing partners, or as conversationalists, or as a playmate. Most of the girls, I believe put up with a lot they do not like, but since it is their job to provide entertainment they do just exactly that. The more popular they are, and the more they can make themselves in demand, the more money they make, for they get a good percentage of that \$100⁰⁰ and the management gets the rest.

There is one particular girl here who has that kind of a form, that kind of a sway in her walk and that look in her large liquid eyes who can swear and make more than any drunken man I've ever heard of. She is the most wild one of the whole group there, and the moment she sees any one who appeals to her fancy, she gives him that come hither look and tries to attract his attention.

She is a good dancer, a good talker, and a good companion for any person who wants to forget about the war.

A soldier goes into the club. He hires a girl of or an hour. He comes and sits on your lap, puts her arms around your neck, puts her cheek against yours. Well, at times, it's a little more than a mortal can bear. After a little while of this a soldier gets rather warm and feels the need of a fresh air. Now what better place is there for this than the outdoor courtyard in the moonlight with a girl.

Here again the same thing is done, only a little more so.

Membership in this club is restricted only to soldiers of the United States, and it costs \$10⁰⁰ to join.

There are neat little bungalows, very clean and comfortable, right near the courtyard which are the living quarters for the girls. All of the girls who come from other provinces or from cities far away from this city in this province, live in the bungalows. Those who live in this city or its environs go home each night, and come to work each morning. These girls work seven days a week, no holidays, no day off.

As far as I know, these girls are under a one year contract, and after that time they can either quit or renew their contract.

All in all, I never expected to find anything like this in this comparatively remote section of China.

There are many other surprising things here that really amaze me. Outside of that - in addition only at club, the next most interesting thing is the black market. The black market of couriers everywhere, in the streets, the stores, in houses, or alleyways.

I take for example the exchange of money. The legal rate in the bank is 20 ~~for~~ Chinese dollars for one American dollar so I have been told. So far I haven't had a chance to exchange any money in the bank, so I wouldn't know how true this is. But the black market pays 85 to 100 Chinese dollars for one American dollar.

This is the way it usually works. A soldier walks along the street. Then out of nowhere a man comes up, taps you on your shoulders, and asks you if you want to change your American or Indian money into Chinese money. In Indian rupees bring in from 27 to 33 Chinese dollars. This black marketer is nothing more than just a human walking bank. He has money bulging in every single pocket.

is Everything that is made in America ~~are~~ in great demand. tooth paste, soap, cigarettes, - Parker Pens especially, and numerous other articles bring in amounts from five to ten times ~~its~~ ^{their} worth. You can readily understand the fantastic prices of merchandise here. The black marketer pays a good price for merchandise. He in turn resells it at a still higher price.

An eight dollar Parker Pen cost \$400.00. A cake of Palmolive Soap is \$200.00. A 15¢ package of Camel sells at \$160.00, Chesterfield \$140.00 Lucky Strike same. But Pall Mall brings in \$180.00 each package.

Ford too is high. Chow Mien is \$70.00 per plate, and fried rice the same.

Recently I had a stem put in my watch. It cost me \$900.00. Two days after it was fixed it broke again. I finally decided not to repair it again. It would be foolish to pay that price once ~~again~~ ^{more}.

There is no such thing as a fixed rate or fixed price here. Prices fluctuate from time to time. It's up to the individual to use his wits and figure out what is a fair price.

I remember one time I rode a public bus from here to there. It cost me fifteen dollars. Another time I took the same bus again from here to the same place.

I gave the collector two ten dollars, expecting a five dollar change. I didn't get it. All I got back was a receipt for \$20.00. Afterwards I found out that the money collectors had tickets of all prices in his possession. Whatever money he receives, he gives back a receipt for that amount.

Well, that one experience taught me a lesson. From then on, I never get on a bus unless I have the exact change in my hands.

Another odd feature in this community is the way crowds like to watch for a show. If any soldier of the U.S. especially when he's talking in the street with a stranger like asking direction, or saying 'hello to' someone - he knows. In less than a minute, men, women, children would form a circular ring around him, watching his every action and movement with an eager curiosity.

It always happens when I tried to speak Cantonese to a man of this province, and he tried to speak his dialect. Neither of us can make head or tail of each other. I'll never forget the time when a merchant in a store took out pencil and paper and wrote in Chinese whether I am a Chinese or not. That was a little too much for

me. I wrote back and said yes. From then on we carried on a conversation with pen and paper.

Fortunately for us, I think we have an opportunity to study ~~the~~ ~~and~~ and of the Chinese are regular enough, - I expect to ^{at} least learn how to speak enough of it to get by.

In some ways China is like India. There are beggars in the streets - but not nearly as much as I expected. The shopkeepers have a tendency to sell articles at a higher rate to American soldiers than to the common people here. This is especially true of the little sidewalk shops. The larger and more modern stores usually sell merchandise at a definite price, but not always. A little bargaining can bring the price down from ten to twenty percent.

American soldiers are very popular and well liked here.

Sometimes a large group of small boys will follow a soldier, yelling at the top of their lungs in their dialect the words "the best," pointing their thumbs upwards.

I never forget the day Corp. L — and I took a walk

down a main road. From as
a large group of small boys
saw us. They came running up like
commandos, yelling like mad, jinking
about shrubs up. For fully half an
hour they followed us, shouting all
the way. We became the center of
attraction, and felt rather embarrassed.

The old women and young girls
rushing to us - by the pond - stared
at us, of all - benign. The street vendor
stared at us, too.

Some kept walking the group
behind us - became larger and
larger, until we were like two
leaders leading a parade. In
desperation, Corp. L - and I
made a fast run and finally
managed to lose the crowd which
made a frantic attempt to
catch up.

I have much - much more to
tell you in my next letter.
Until then.

Best Regards
John

Letter # 7

October 18, 1943

Dear Professor Radin -

It is not hard to understand, after a person has been in China for a brief period of time, why this country has been able to endure so much hardship and tragedy, in war and in peace, and yet is able to go on serenely as though nothing of real importance has really happened at all. I think the secret of it all can be explained in the almost unbelievable human endurance of the men, women, yes, even of children too whose strength and power of endurance are really a thing to marvel at.

Watching the common people at work and play, one begins to realize the calmness, the serenity, the patience and sense of humor of the ordinary Chinese laborer, the street vendor, the coolie, the merchant, and the simple down-to-earth farmers.

Out in the open country, away from the din and noise of the big city, life goes on its simple way as it did, probably generations ago. The large rice fields stretch out unendingly, like a huge mosaic. The

wind blows, and the rice fields
of Cutler - like a - huge - flexible
cloth. On all sides the mountains
form a large steel ring, and the
valley is like an ~~immense~~ ^{immense} sheet of
stained glass.

The people are like small
moving dots in the valley below.

Here a sun-browned farmer
with a conical straw hat is
bent over, cutting the ripen rice
stalks, - his body & feet sunk deep in
the soft wet mud. Over there
an equally dark-skin woman is
tying the bundles of rice stalks in
little groups. They look up
now and then, the wind and sun
of China are prominent on their faces.
The years of hardship, the unmistakable
signs of long hard labor are revealed
in the callous hands, the toughened
skin, the wrinkled faces. Yet
there is that look of contentment
of real living in life - look of the
eyes, in the manner of work, and
in the variety of daily challenges.

This is the land, the earth,
the home, and ~~from~~ this land the
people come, and into this land
the people go, often their lives are
lived, and they ask no more.

The hills of China are resting
places of the dead. Graveyards,

Combs, monuments, temples, statues clutter the hillsides everywhere.

Where we are now there are hills and mountains on all sides, some sharp and steep, others low and level. Below, the wide valley is a sea of rice fields. A wide lake lies at the foot of a sheer ^{steep} mountain, and there a big small boats of all types and designs float and drift under the China sky.

Probably there are no hills anywhere else that are as interesting as the hills of China. One almost always comes across the ^{most} unexpected surprises at the most expected places.

Take a little trip with me up to the top of a certain mountain. The present fades away, and the misty past comes forth. But its sacred temples, huge statues of Gods and Goddesses chiseled out of stone, immense elaborate Combs, heavy stone-carved tigers, pagodas, and interesting graves; some of these have been standing for hundreds of years, and neither the ravages of wind and rain can completely hide the beauty and glory of the ancient distant past.

- 4 -

We start out one bright blue afternoon which is just the right day for a hike up the mountain, the ^{weather} being not too ~~hot~~ nor too cold. We walk single file on the rocky dusty road. The road is level now, and then gradually it narrows down to a path which begins to rise slowly up the side of a mountain.

The constant tramping of human feet for countless years has worn and pressed down the grass and wild growth completely, and a smooth walkable way, wide enough for one single person to pass at a time, is clearly indicated on the ground. This narrow path runs and twists in a wild manner. Sometimes it dips down, and other times it rises almost in a perpendicular wall. In places, the hard natural rocks form a convenient step to climb up on. In other spots the path is so smooth that one little misstep will send the unfortunate ^{victim} tumbling wildly down the mountainside to his doom.

Looking down, the valley is a most interesting sight to behold.

The different rice fields, one on top of another, are like huge steps of a ladder up the mountain side. The sides of the mountain sweep down in a straight line. The small villages are like small wooden toys in a sea of green. In the distance mountains and more mountains form a concentric circle. Water buffaloes graze contentedly on the grass on the slopes.

The wind blows hard and fast, and knocks against you, and you open a door to let it pass.

On, on, the trail snakes up the hill, and the soldiers, one by one follow, like separate parts of a large centipede. When at last, a sharp sudden curve in the trail brings us right into the very center of a temple, which up to now, has remained very well hidden behind trees and natural contours of the land.

We enter a large open gate into a small center courtyard. On top of the open doorway there are large Chinese characters written in gold paint against a black background. Long slogans hang on both sides of the doorway.

We climb a few steps and come

upon a slightly raised up platform, composed of large flat stones or rocks. In the very center - coons a - huge idol of a female God, glistening in golden splendor. Directly in front of her is a golden urn where the worshippers put in joss sticks in reverence.

About six feet away, on the right and left of the idol, there are immense statues of four rather ferocious looking idols which resemble the warriors of olden days, I think.

These four idols are in a sitting position, very elaborately colored and chiseled out of material that looks like plaster. They are about three times life size, and certainly are most impressive, and curiously, seem almost alive, so well has the artist done his work.

A few steps and we enter into a square rectangular courtyard. We can see now how aged the temple is. Pieces of wood have fallen, and there is that old lived-in atmosphere about the place everywhere.

Now suddenly out of the silent void we - hear the loud sound of Cantonese voices, surprising by enough. Then on the other side, the sound of Mandarin voices.

We discover ^{that} we have come upon a school which has moved up into the temple from below the valley when the soldiers came and fused the land and buildings of our ^{living} quarters ^{there}. So the teachers, even students, have come into the quiet of the four-hundred-year old temple, and resumed the teaching and studies there.

All the students are very young, from five to ten. How very strange to discover a Cantonese class going full force in the silence of the hills. And less than a stone throw from it, a Mandarin class going on in a room of the temple.

In the front of the room where the Cantonese class is conducted, there is a bright new coffin of black lacquer and vermilion red, draped over with a piece of cloth to keep the dust from accumulating on it.

This, explains the teacher, is for the monk who is the head man of the temple here. This beautiful expensive coffin is waiting for him until the day he dies.

In the times of the past, no doubt, the temple was a place for worship. Time and war - have invaded the seclusion of the holy temple, and now its doors are flung open to the eyes of the Western World.

Delicate pictures, scrolls, art-work, hang impressively on every wall of the school rooms. Dust and time have dulled the beauty and glory of most of them.

We come out! - From the colorful ancient temple we drift back to the present, and on, on, we go again. Up-hill, down-hill, we keep on, the men and I, until at last, we come upon the top of a high sloping-hill. The whole countryside stretch out before us clear and bright. The wind is cool and brisk. The hills run blue and purple circles all around us, and looking down,

we realize for the first time how really high we are.

What more can I say? What is time and space on a mountain top? - For one brief moment the reality of the world is lost and forgotten. We move in the misty floating sphere of gods and goddesses. We smell the perfumed odor of joss and long-life punks. We hear the tingle of delicate bells, ^{the pounding} of huge brass gongs, the beating of ancient wooden drums.

There is a feeling of the mystical Shangri-La, it comes, is felt, and then like a floating bubble, it drifts and then, then disappears.

We wake from the dreamy mood. It is a long difficult way to go back. Down, down, we go, through mountain trails where once the gods had treaded perhaps.

We cross streams and fields, and soon we are back. Another day has gone and of led. Tomorrow will come again.

— Today is come, and up the mountain we shall go once more.

We take a different trail today. We left the hills of China far off for us today? We cut across a large rice field, one by one, and come into a street of a small village town. Here the sun-baked farmers and wives stare at us, and the robust babies and children yell and shout their joyful welcome.

Sitting in the doorway of a mud hut an old toothless farmer smoking a huge waterpipe watches contentedly as we pass. An old old woman, feet bound small and neat, grins curiously and her dim eyes follow the shadows of marching men until they disappear.

The mud huts of the little village are crude and primitive. The people are simple and friendly. We leave them behind us, leadingly toward the sloping hills.

We walk along a road that is dug out of hard rock, probably with nothing more than human coolie labor. It winds steadily along the edges of the mountain in a rising circular ring.

At length we come upon a most interesting scenic spot, a place of rare ethereal beauty,

The temple of Five Hundred Mounts.

A strong high wall surrounds this spot for a thousand wonders. We go up a few stone steps and enter into a square open garden where some varieties of plants, trees and flowers peep out of the earth in wonderment at the strange soldiers who today have come, and will leave, amazed and surprised at the strange wonders of the China hills.

We climb a few flat steps again and enter into another rectangular courtyard, slightly larger than the previous one, and here, directly forward, there is a large open doorway, in front of which there are several wide flat steps of smooth gray stone.

Entering, we come upon a most fascinating and thoroughly impressive scene, a sort of dreamy-like atmosphere, a lingering, enchanting mood, yes, a minor Changin-Laf indeed.

The first thing that catches the eye are three immense golden idols, each one sitting serenely in a compartment - draped with large red curtains which fold and unfold in a very artistic manner. Directly in front of each idol is an ornate, very artistically fashioned, filled with gold and adorned with which long

Life candles and slow-burning joss sticks can be placed.

Still over the floor, in front of the idols are round elaborate cushions, covered with rich leather, of any cloth of strong durable silk. In the very center of the room, suspended by a strong cable, a strong burning light glows steadily from what looks like a glass cup.

Continuously, it has burned for more than a hundred years, the priest in the long blue robe tells us. This temple, he says, is over a thousand years old, and the five hundred almost life-like statues displayed in three separate buildings inside this courtyard have remained there for more than a hundred years.

On both sides of the wall, to the right and left of the three golden idols, a mass of figures of ^{out} ~~carved~~ gracefully in a smooth sweeping curve like waves ~~brushed~~ with a broom of tender wind.

Indeed, the design on both walls has an ocean motive to it. All the figures are either standing or sitting on some form of life usually found on the sea.

Here, with base of feet firmly
implanted on the back of a
large gold fish - the call peaceful
figure of a ^a kind looking statue gazes
down serenely. Then, sitting on
the back of a smooth eel,
another impressive figure in a
long flowing gown looks
down.

Elephants, dragons, turtles, and
many other varieties of animal and
sea life are represented in a
dazzle of color and design.

All of these figures juts out
from the walls about three
feet from the floor to the
very top of the ceiling. Figures,
statues, idols everywhere where
the eye can see.

The spectator feels as if he
is wandering in a mythical land
of unreality, of the supernatural.
He - moves, in long flowing
robes wanders in and out in
strange silence.

Several Chinese soldiers and
a couple of civilians are silently
praying, lighting joss sticks and
pulling them up the different
ways around the temple.

Wandering around we come across ~~the~~ most unexpected surprise yet ^{encountered}. Directly behind the three huge idols, a large picture of the Generalissimo ~~is~~ displayed around the frame, long elegans are written with a sweep of the brush. Above the picture huge scrolls and long elaborate phrases hang artistically down.

I must also mention that on a shelf about five feet away from the three idols, there are two tubular glass cases, inside of which are petals of rare flowers which look as if they have just been plucked fresh from the ground.

Large stacks of ceremonial papers, burnt during prayers on special occasions are prominently displayed on a high window ledge near the back of the room.

A little to the right from the center of the room, a huge wooden dais, probably used only during special occasions and ceremonies, adds a touch of real interest to the room.

Horizontally, to the right, on a strong pole, a triangular frame

dangles gracefully. His triangular frame is painted first a glistening black paint, and at regular spaced intervals a delicately carved figure of a female Goddess, painted in rich gold, is placed.

He wonders and strangereness, the rich color here, hold us spellbound.

Would we like to see the two other rooms, the monk asks us? We follow him out and go across the yard, entering a small open doorway on the left.

Entering, we come face to face with an immense ^{small} figure of golden splendor. Her eyes ~~are~~ closed, and her countenance is one of peace and contentment. From her back beginning almost at the bottom of the feet and going upwards, a series of hands of all sort, twenty seven in all, not including the two regular hands.

At the top, just above the head of the huge idol, a cluster of blossoms is balanced by the palms of the exquisitely carved hands.

The room here is divided into three equal sections. The golden idol is located in the middle section. The other two sections are to the right and left, one on each side of ~~the~~ the statue.

In three artistically arranged tiers which form a square U, figures of all expressions and positions are abundantly displayed. All of the figures are in a sitting position, & yet so expertly - had the artist - molded his art, no two are alike at all.

Under each of the images there hangs a neat wooden tray on which is written the number, the name of the monk which the image represents.

Although the temple itself is over a thousand years old, the rooms have still a strong sturdy appearance.

The colors on all the idols still retain their pure bright colors.

We come out of this room and go toward the right. Here we go into another room built in identically the same way as the one we just visited.

Again, entering, we come face to face with another gigantic goddess, and this too, is painted in gold. She is sitting on the back of a peacock which is painted in bright turquoise blue.

This room here is divided into three separate sections, like the other one, and in each section of the room, countless

idols are prominently displayed
their upon them.

All these idols are about $\frac{3}{4}$
- life size.

Now who could ever have
guessed that in the hills of China,
one can come across such rare
sights and scenes of great
interest.

It has been a worthwhile day.
We come out and go down the
mountain. It has passed another
day.

But still another day comes
on. Up the mountain we go
once more.

But this trip will have to
wait until the next letter.
There is much much more to
tell.

Until then —

Regards —
J. H. on

Letter
no. 8.

18 November, 1943

Doctor Radin:

I must tell you somemore about the city which I told you about in my previous letters. It seems that I missed the more interesting part of that city until one night when I and another companion happened to run into a Colonel in the street. I had just come out of a book store, holding a Chinese-English Dictionary in my hand when suddenly a voice behind me said, "Is that a dictionary you have?" I turned around, and there was a very congenial Colonel standing in back of me. I don't know him, I never met him before. I told the Colonel that I just bought the book, and that I am looking for somemore books at a more reasonable price.

That started him off. "Have you been to the Thief's Market?" he asked. I told him no; that I don't know the town well since I am only a newcomer. Then he started in a very interesting way telling us all about the Thief's Market, what goes on there, what is sold there. "And there are many book shops," he added, "where you can get good rates on books."

"Where is the place?" I asked him.

"It's not far from here," he answered, "and if you two are not doing anything special, I'll be glad to show you around." We followed him, for we were anxious to visit a place which sounded so intriguing.

Not only was the Thief's Market interesting. It is much more than that. The people, the articles which were sold, the manner in which they were sold, all these, combined with the busy atmosphere of articles, money, changing hands constantly, the bright lights, all the varied heterogeneous goods, old, new, stolen, well- it was indeed a unforgettable experience.

It is easy to see, thinking back now, why it was that we have missed this interesting place, despite the numerous times we have been to town. The market place is located only a stone throw from what proves to be the brightest, the most interesting, the most busy street in the town. Why is it that we have missed such a big, busy street before? The reason is this.

A large massive tower stands at the very entrance of that street. This brick tower is wide enough to completely hide

the street, the busy activities, the sights from all directions. The only possible way to know that such an interesting section of the town exist is to go into it unexpectedly, or if one takes the trouble to go around the huge tower, and discovers for himself that there is such a wonderland.

But to go back to the Colonel. While we were walking on the street, he took the opportunity to tell us something of his life. It's a funny thing. We were complete strangers to him, yet he talked to us like we were old friends. He reminded me very much of the Colonel I used to work for in San Francisco. This Colonel speaks perfect Mandarin, without a single trace of English accent. He used to live in China a score of years ago. Had been up in the northern part of China, had been to the Southern seaports of Canton. The war brought him back here after an absence of over fifteen years.

Well, we entered that bright long street behind the tall tower. We walked about a block, turned left and walked two blocks, turned right and we were in the midst of a huge shuffling crowd. On both sides of the sidewalk, the open air shops littered the street like dead Japs in the battlefields of China...

Here one can find anything from a snap button to large beautiful vases which apparently cost a good fortune. The people running these open air shops are old, and look poor. Many of the articles sold here are old, second handed, but the majority of the merchandise is new. A typical Thief's Market shop looks like this. On the sidewalk is spread a large thick cloth, usually about four feet square, and on top of this is displayed in neat rows and bundles all the wares for sale.

One thing about this interesting section of town. It is possible to bargain and argue over prices like in India. If the buyer is persistent enough, he can cut the price down from ten to thirty percent. Sometimes even, forty percent.

Another ~~thing~~ thing, in the street where the Thief's Market is located, we see the one-man-walking store. This person usually carries all the articles he has to sell on his person, or else in a big suitcase. He walks among the busy buyers, stopping this one and that one, to show his goods, (usually second hand stuff). Over here we see a man holding an old wrist watch in his hands. His eyes are searching the crowd for a potential

buyer. He sees one. He stops him. The potential buyer takes the watch in his hands and examines it carefully. There is argument over the price. This one shakes his head. That one shakes his head. The watch is handed back. No sale. Another potential buyer is spotted. He takes the watch and fingers it slowly. He turns it around. His eyes speak approval. This one talks. That one nods his head. A sale is made.

These one man shops mingle with the crowd, and clutter up the road.

The Colonel spoke again, "Do you know why they call this the Thief's Market?" I shook my head. "Well," he said, "whenever anybody loses anything, he always come to this place to see if it is being offered for sale. Lost articles have a funny way of turning up here."

One can always tell, after he has shopped here more than once, that all articles are sold at a price more than ^{what} they are worth. A buyer goes up to one of these open air shops. [↑] He asks about the price. If he is unfamiliar with the routine here, he may pay the first original price that is asked. If he has had some experience in dealing with the people here, he will bargain at the prices, or else walk away, in which case, the shopkeeper will call out, "How much will you give?" From then on, it's rather easy to name one's own price.

The "thieves" set their shops on the sidewalk right in front of regular stores. The one man walking shops do their business, up and down the streets in front of the thieves' shops, so actually there are three places doing business simultaneously.

The regular stores which line the street in profusion sell everything at a fixed rate. Here it is very hard to bargain.

"I alway like to come here," the Colonel said, "it's really very interesting to watch the people, and to talk to them." He went from one place to another, looking at articles which he liked, talking in pure Mandarin. Many of the Chinese were amazed that a white man can speak such good Chinese. They gathered in a large crowd and stared at him, almost ~~not~~ ^{hardly} believing their ears. At one sidewalk shop, the Colonel saw a nice carved teatray, lined on the inside with brightly shining stones. He immediately became interested in it.

"How much is that?" he asked the shopkeeper.

"A thousand dollars," the shopkeeper said. The Colonel took the tray in his hand and stared at it for a long time. He put it under a light and kept turning the tray over and over. "It's a beautiful thing," he said to us in English. "I have one similiar to this at home which I bought many years ago."

At that time, one can pick up something like this for much much less than the present price." This Colonel is an old hand in dealing with these people. He made the shopkeeper cut the price down to \$900.00. "I like to come back in the afternoon tomorrow and look at this article in the sunlight," he said to us. "This tray is really beautiful, and I very tempted to buy it."

The Colonel took us into several book shops, but I wasn't able to find exactly what I wanted. He also told us about other interesting sections of the town. It really would be an experience if it were possible to ^{spend} some time with him, and let him show us the sights. He took leave of us soon, after a couple of hours. I never did find out his name, although he's in the artillery, by his insignia which he wears. I thought that that was the last we'll ever see of him. But one day, while I was doing some work in the Adjutant's office, where I am now temporarily working, he came in. I recognized him immediately. He was in a terrible hurry, and I never did have a chance to say hello to him, which I would have liked to very much.

After the Colonel left us, we walked along the busy main street, which was only two blocks away. This street stretched from where the tall tower ends, and ^{go} up about twelve long blocks. Here are located all the jewelry stores, one next to another, all the paper stores, clustered together, his department stores, photo studios. All the stores here seem to be of a higher standard than those in other sections of town. They are more appealing to the eye, have a greater variety of merchandise to select from, and are brightly lighted. They are also neat and clean.

We went from one store to another, browsing around, pricing some of the goods. The prices of ordinary goods like handkerchiefs and lady's Purses would make your hair stand on edges. The highest prices on merchandise are goods that are manufactured in the U.S. An ordinary can of talcum powder (10 c size) cost \$250.00. Cost \$90.00 to develop one negative. \$250.00 for one photo to be made (smaller than a post card).

We didn't stay in that section of town very long, because it was getting late. We did go back many times afterward and visit it.

One Sunday afternoon I happened to run into a typical Chinese funeral procession. I have often heard from my folks of the elaborate funerals of China. Now I had a chance to see one. From afar I heard the strange wailing of mournful music. It got louder and louder, until the music became quite clear, then I saw a large group of people, dressed in dark blue or black, walking on the street. There were three musicians, all

playing an instrument that resembles a small Chinese violin. (That's about as close to it as I can come in the description). They were all fiddling away nonchalantly without any interest in what they were doing. Right behind them came quite a large crowd of people, all dressed in dark sombre colors. I noticed that there were quite a few children in the group. although I doubted very much if they knew what ^{they} were doing.

Behind this crowd there followed many autos, some of them quite new, I was rather surprised. Inside of each auto sat a quiet sad looking person, maybe two. Evidently the dead man was a quite well-to-do person. Behind the autos followed another group of people, most of them holding black umbrellas over their heads. Whether this was to keep to sun out, or whether it was part of the custom in a funeral procession, I do not know. But this last group of persons, I noticed, seemed a little more depressed, and one of two of the ladies, occasionally wiped their eyes with a small handkerchief. Behind this came the coffin. But before this, I should say, was the picture of the dead man, carried by four coolies. The picture was encased in a golden frame. On long ribbons were written many Chinese characters. The photo showed a man who was about 40 years old, dressed in an American-made suit, high forehead, and wearing a pair of dark rimmed glasses. He had an intelligent face, and evidently was a merchant, or even perhaps, a scholar. Behind the picture followed another group of people, and a couple automobiles. Now we come to the coffin. It was no doubt an expensive one. The coffin was placed upon a rectangular board. Four long poles protruded from each corner, and these poles were placed upon the shoulders of four coolies ^{who} were carrying the coffin. The flat platform on which the coffin was placed had many small thin boards which were built into a sort of frame work of squares, each one about two feet square. In other words, the coffin was inside of a framework of openings. This framework of criss-cross boards was about seven feet high, and from the top of it, flowers of many colors and varieties flowed down in a graceful stream. Directly behind the coffin came four persons, dressed completely in white. Three were women, one was a man. The woman had a white cloth on top of her head which drooped all the way down and covered her eyes. Her hands were gripping tightly to a white handkerchief which was pressed against her face. She was dressed in flowing white gowns, and one of her arms was entwined to the arms of another woman, who too, was dressed in white. On the other side of the widow was another woman in white. The one single ^{man} who was in white, was a few paces behind the the three women. Behind the group in white came another group of people, all in dark blue or black.

The procession went through the different streets in the city, the music trailing away in the distance. When it disappeared, and I lost it to sight.

Perhaps you may like to know something of the life as we lived it here. I don't believe that I have ever mentioned it in my other previous letters.

First of all, we are in the very midst of a graveyard. On at least three sides, the graves of dead men surround us. Some of the resting places of the dead men are very simple. They consist only of a plain piece of flat stone, stuck into the ground. The stone is bare, with no designs nor names on it. Under this stone a dead man lies at rest, we hope. Some of the graves are a little more elaborate. They consist of a brick-like structure, either round or square, with a heavy stone door on which is written in big letters the name of the departed soul. To the side of the door, usually on both sides, there is a big smooth black stone, and on it is neatly cut the life story of the dead man.

There is one peculiar thing that happens almost every night here. Not far from here there is a little house which every night plays the strangest and saddest music that I ever heard. Sometimes in the middle of the night, at about two or three A.M. the music would come trailing over the night air; it is a strange, sad, wailing music at that. I never found out what it is supposed to be, until one day someone told me that it was to chase the dead spirits away.

Each night the music is the same. It starts out on a high wailing tone, then it gets a little lower, then it wails and cries terribly. Sometimes this goes on for hours, for example, from two a.m. until about four or five a.m. in the morning. In the quiet of the night, when the night is dark, and the air is lonely, hearing that music at night brings on an eerie and uncomfortable feeling. Now that I have gotten used to it, it sort of lulls a person to sleep, if he happens to wake up in the middle of the night.

I must tell you of the day when we struck the coffin of two dead men. It came about in a curious way. The middle section of the road leading up to our camp is very steep, and there are times when our trucks can hardly go up without terrible straining on the engine. One day someone had the bright idea of bringing the hump down about three or four feet, so that the road would not be so steep. We started early in the morning, working with pick and shovel; the hours went by. Slowly but gradually the road became more level. It seemed then that there was no reason to continue on. But a few hard working soldiers decided that the road should be dug down at least a foot more. The sergeant in charge evidently agreed. So we started digging again. Almost immediately one worker dug out a broken rice bowl. Then another worker dug up still another bowl. Some of the older Chinese boys who knew something of Chinese customs said that without

doubt, there was dead people buried very close to here, and that in his opinion, we should not disturb the dead. But everybody kept on digging. Soon one of the workers who was swinging a pick, hit something that made his pick bounce. He had hit ^{upon} a large slab of heavy stone. We dug that flat stone up. It was square, of a dark dull greenish gray color, beautifully carved with fancy designs and pictures. As far as I was able to see, there was no writing on it. One of the Chinese boys said, "I don't think we should dig any lower. I am certain that there is a dead man right under the heavy stones." By now, most of the diggers became terribly curious. One of them said, "Well, if Smith or Jones or whatever his name is, is down there, let's dig him out and bury him somewhere else. For a man." He immediately started to dig. Others followed him too.

Very soon we dug up more of the flat stones, each one just as fancy and elaborate as the first one. Each piece of stone was about three feet by four feet, rectangular shape. After all the stones were dug up, it was a very easy matter to get to the coffin. It was about a couple of inches under the last stone. About this time the air around us had a slightly bad odor. Some of the Chinese boys who were very superstitious went ~~off~~ away. They didn't want to look or have anything to do with disturbing a dead man at rest. One American boy who was terribly curious and rather excited at the sight of a dead man's resting place shouted suddenly, "We can look into the coffin," for his sharp eyes had noticed an opening in the cheap wooden box where the wood had rotted away. He bent down and pressed his eyes against the hole in the box. Then he stuck his nose in and took a deep breath. "It doesn't smell bad at all," he told us. That last bit of news made us wince. "There's a skeleton in there," he shouted excitedly, as though he had made a sudden discovery. Then he told us that there were clothes on the dead man, but much of them had rotted away. Jokingly, some of the boys said to him, "Just you wait until tonight when some unseen hands will lift you out of bed and deposit you somewhere else. Smith or Jones, or whatever his name is, is not going to let you alone for disturbing him like this. You just mark my word and see what's going to happen to ~~you~~ ^{you}." He just laughed, and kept looking in the box. The sergeant in charge decided that perhaps it is best to let "Old Man Smith" lay where he was. So we took back two of the heavy stones, laid them on top of the box, covered the whole thing up with a few inches of dirt, and called it a day. Poor "Smith". We walked on top of him every day, going up or down the road. The trucks roared over him. The rain soaked into him. May his body rest in Peace!

At the time we were cleaning out our area, we called ourselves the 21st CCC. At the time we were fixing the road, we called ourselves the 21st Engineers. Now we are the 21st Grave Robbers!

Our life here, in comparison to the one I lived in India, is very different, and very much better. In India, before, the weather here alone is worth the trip from India. The only time when it is cold is when we wake up early in the morning. The afternoon and evening is very similar to a typical California day.

It is here in China that we see our first running hot water since the day we left the United States. When I first took a hot shower ever here, it was just like a comfortable luxury. We have workers who sweep our rooms, make our beds, wash up our laundry; the food is served right under our noses in regular cups and dishes. We eat fresh food and vegetables with very little canned goods. Go to movies three nights a week. Have electric lights in our tent. And we study Mandarin three nights a week. Life is like this so far. How much longer it will be like this is hard to say.

To night the high cost of living here, I still find it possible to send money home worthily. It costs like hell to have a photo taken, but that's the way things are. If you want a thing bad enough, you just dig in and pay.

There is one impression about this part of China which I just can't get over yet. That is the unexcusable way in which the people get things done or undone. Take for instance, a simple thing like bus riding. There is no such thing as riding a bus in an orderly way. First of all, find a seat, that is the motto. If you happen to be a woman, if you have to stand, well, lady, you just stand, and that is that. The people ride in bus, faster than sailboats in a sea of overflowing olive oil. I can never forget the day I was in the city, and I tried to catch a bus. It came to a stop with a full load, with passengers flowing out on the street on the sides. There is a very little narrow door for the passengers to come out. All the windows were open. Before the bus was half emptied, the crowd on the outside began to fight a battle to get in. Many of the more energetic climbed in by way of the open windows. The incoming passengers, fighting hard to get in, soon blocked all the way, that the remaining half of the outgoing passengers was unable to get out. One group was pushing this way; the other group was pushing the other way. Result, everybody was pushing, nobody able to get in or come out; neither group was willing to give the other one the right of way. Finally an impatient man who was stuck on the inside for so long, gave one final plunge and stormed his way out of there. The rest of the passengers followed him out.

Then followed the battle to see who gets ^{can} the first seat first. The driver of the car ran out of the way. They allowed everybody they were able to get in.

One lady brought in two chickens. They, strangely enough, remained very quiet throughout the trip. Another man brought in a large clumsy package which took up the room of three persons. A baby was crying terribly, so the mother unlaced her garment, revealing a nice soft white breast which the baby hungrily grasped with its mouth. For some strange reason, an old woman was burning one stick after another, filling the stuffy car with a peculiar odor.

The busses go about ten or fifteen miles an hour, and sometimes pass from one side of the uneven road to the other. No matter how crowded the busses are, somehow they always manage to crowd in just one more person.

Traveling on the road from here to there, there is a great deal of interest to see. All types of vehicles, all modes of travel are encountered. Over here we see a crude contraption, made up of two rubber wheels, several strong bamboo poles running parallel to each other, and a small short horse at the front. These "beasts" are used for transporting anything from human beings to hauling bricks. Oftentime I see the old farmers and their wives and children riding so nonchalantly on the top of this crude little vehicle.

Over the road travel, too, 1940 Chevrys, Buicks, GI trucks, bicycles, motorcycles, jeeps, station wagons, and hand-made vehicles of all types and designs, holding from two to ten persons, depending on how big the vehicle is.

The people who travel on the road are just as different as the types of vehicles which transport them. The old farmers' wives, browned and hardened by wind, sun, and rain, dressed in their thick clothes of black and blue, with a wide straw hat on top of their heads, and often with a heavy load of wood or basket-strings to their backs, make an interesting picture on the dusty road. Against a background of rolling hills and mountains. Then, suddenly, you see a different scene. The road everywhere. Small children are running in places and are very revealing. The "behind" is revealed, while the rest of the body is covered up in a most unique costume.

The women around here are still in the process of being "lily feet" of days gone by. Many of them have the small "lily feet" of days gone by. The women, too, have a strange habit of tying up their heads with a piece of cloth, usually dark blue.

In this section of China, most all, as I recall, are all women have to be gotten from natural "curves". To see the men, women,

and children, every morning going down to the wells or streams, or rivulets, carrying two wooden buckets slung over their shoulders. In the streams the people stop to wash their feet, their clothes, their vegetables. They dip the buckets into the same water and carry them home for use.

With the exception of the beggars and street urchins, the rest of the people, no matter how poor they may be, or how crude the house they live in, somehow, they never give the impression of filth and dirt which the people of India seem to possess in a large degree.

There is still so much more that I want to tell you. But all things have to end sometime.

will
~~Write~~ write more in the next letter.

Till the next letter,



Note to censor:

Sorry to take up your time. It won't happen again, I hope.

KUNMING, CHINA
27 July 1945

Dear Professor Radin:

Although it has been an extremely long time since I last wrote to you, and although I had told you that I probably will not send another letter until I hear from you, I find myself started on another letter which I hope you will find time to acknowledge. Since you do not usually stay put, it is my guess that you have been traveling around to different parts of the country, and the letters have a hard time catching up with you.

Outside of my letters and a short account of my travels which I had kept since the day I first came into the Army, I had not the ambition or time to write anything else. Even these long letters which I used to be able to dash off at random have become almost impossible to write. Perhaps I have hit a vacuum which everyone experiences now and then, and which sometime in the future I may look back as an interesting experience. Instead of spending my time getting writer's cramp, I have been spending most of my spare moments studying one subject after another to kill the monotony of doing nothing.

Mrs. de Fremery had written letters to me in the past, and of course, I am always glad to hear from her. I find that after all these years, I am still able to read letters in a foreign language. Have you had a chance to see her at all recently?

Be certain to say a cheerful hello to Mrs. Radin. Is she still working at her old job? Or has she joined the ranks of the war workers in the plants?

Several times in the past I have requested that you send me a copy of the journal in which you told me you had submitted several of the tales and stories. I would like so much to see how they read. If you can do this little favor for me, I would appreciate it so much.

Although I have given up reading for many many months, I find myself going back to bedtime reading again. In the past several weeks, have finished several novels, short stories, and numerous magazine articles. Have even indulged in several mystery stories which I never used to care for. If and when I ever start to read western stories, then you can be certain I am ready to go back to civilian life.

In a couple of weeks I will have completed my twenty-fifth month of overseas service. In many ways this period away from home is quite an experience, and not as rough and rugged as expected.

This is due, in no small measure, to the fact that I got away from the old outfit I came over with, and got into an office which handled the kind of work similar to what I used to do in the Presidio back home. For this reason the time passes reasonably fast, and I do not feel like I did when I was with the 21st F.H.

Army life is still not the life for me. No doubt many others feel the same way too. I can hardly wait for the day when I can don my civilian clothes and go back to my former work, which I now have completely forgotten. My old boss, the Captain, had been transferred, rather I should say promoted, but he writes me frequently, so I am in touch with the latest going-ons in regard to the department.

The other day I was thinking how long this war has lasted already, and it brought back to my mind a talk I had with you not long after I went into the Army. It was my opinion then that the war would last at least five years. Now it is 1945 and the war still seems a long way from terminating. Perhaps I wasn't so far wrong after all. If it weren't for this war, everything would have been so different. Perhaps I might even have gone back to the work I did when working for you, but now all these many years have gone and passed, and I do not know whether I can ever get the enthusiasm and desire which is so necessary for me to go back to it.

I do not remember for sure just exactly where I left off in that series of long letters I wrote to you. Since I have more or less stayed at the same location since my arrival here, I naturally ran out of material to write about, and that was my main reason for that long period of silence during which time I wrote nothing but short V-Mail to everyone.

From all indications at present it appears as if I shall spend another Christmas holiday in China. I can remember so well the last Christmas we had. I believe it is permissible to say this, since it is passed and gone, that we spent a pretty cold and dreary Christmas eve then. Almost five hours we spent out in the cold and wind before we got word that all was clear. We had beer and turkey the next day, and thus, another Christmas has come and gone.

But so much for all that.

Although Yunnan was very strange and foreign when I first arrived here, I have gotten used to it to a certain degree by now. Sights and scenes which once were strange and unusual are now accepted as commonplace and have a familiar "fitted-to-the scene" look about it. No doubt Yunnan will be greatly changed as the years go on, but certain aspects of the life here will remain comparatively unchanged despite the advent of modern influences. The farm and interior life have gone on these many decades and the farmer and their folks tilled as before, and whose only ambition in life seemed to be to obtain sufficient

food to fill their bodies, and a place over their head, and clothes to wear. The peasants really are the people of the land, the people of China.

It is startling to note the antagonistic attitude of the majority of the soldiers toward the natives, as a whole. In many ways this is brought about by a too closely comparison of the country here and the country back home. In some instances perhaps there is good reason for the justification of an attitude which is somewhat less than friendly.

The filth and poverty overwhelmingly apparent in the Kunming region have brought about a great deal of black market activities and a wide scale indulgence of goods and articles disappearing into nowhere. Much of these land up in the shop windows in the city where fabulous prices are paid for them. In view of the fact that many of the so called "luxury items" come from the hands of the GI, and in some cases stolen from them, it is not difficult to come to the conclusion that no one but thieves dwell in the land. In a vicinity of economic chaos where the bare necessity of keeping alive is utmost in the minds of the starving populace, there is no doubt that activities of this sort are running rampant. In one way it is unfortunate, for first impression is always formed when a stranger meets another stranger, or when a person visits another country, for the first time.

The backward, poor region of Yunnan is what may be called China's "Tobacco Road." Here instead of the poor whites, as the people are commonly called in the Georgia backwoods, we see the "laopaising" or the common man. They seem destined to stay on the land like their fathers, and their fathers' fathers before them.

The women and young girls are hard workers. In fact most of the rice planting are done by them, and during the harvest season, they come out in flocks and work all day long in the fields, half-bent, like a living scarecrow, moving leisurely across the width of the field. These women and young girls are strong and sturdy, no doubt about that. I have ^{seen} old women, whose faces are wrinkled from the wind and sun, and who are able to carry heavy loads on their backs which even many of us who are younger, are unable to endure.

The little children are playful and have a habit of following GI's around, yelling "Ding Hao" and sticking their thumbs in the air. It is a very common scene, this, and I am quite certain that wherever there are soldiers, this scene is reenacted everywhere.

Where there are soldiers there are bound to be the evil and the bad. And of course, Kunming is no exception. The usual

Saturday night crowd, and the week-end pleasure seekers can find sufficient wine, women and song, just as anywhere else. There is the usual out-of-bound district, and certain in-bound restaurants. Frankly, the most interesting food is not served in the so called in-bound restaurant, but at little small restaurants away from the crowded sections of town. The little provincial restaurants served odd unusual dishes, many of which I have never seen or tasted before. The dishes are usually double the average portion served at restaurants back home. I remember so well the first time I went to one of these provincial restaurants. Because I did not know then how large the dishes were, I naturally ordered too much. That meal cost me and a friend of mine about six thousand dollars (Chinese) and we could not finish it. The second time we went to another one of these restaurants we just ordered half of what we would order, and in this way we got exactly just what we needed.

In most of these restaurants the custom of passing small towels to the people after they have finished their meals are being followed. In some of the smaller restaurants, it is more interesting to watch the people eating than concentrating on one's food. It seems to be a habit with almost all the Yunnanese to make as much noise while eating as they possibly can. Especially in a shop where noodles are served. When the restaurant is filled, and everybody is eating noodles, well- it's a sound that is not easily forgotten. The noodles really sound good!

While wandering around town one evening I came across a small open air theater where old Chinese stage shows were presented nightly. This evening I decided to give it a try and see if there is any difference in the method of presentation as compared to those given in San Francisco and New York. This troupe is a small theatrical troupe, and does not have any big name stars. A ticket for one of the better seats cost \$7.00.

The stage was a rigged-up affair, just barely big enough for not more than four or five persons to be standing together at one time. Several musicians were cleverly placed on the right side of the stage. Scenery and props were lacking in elaborateness and dazzling flashy colors which are the main attractions of Chinese dramas back in the States. Our tickets stated that eight p.m. was the opening time for the play. Knowing Chinese time from experience, I deliberately went in about twenty minutes late. As expected, the play had not yet started, and the carpenters were busily nailing the scenery behind the curtain.

The theater itself was nothing more than a spacious backyard of a home. A large sloping roof jutted out and formed a sweeping cover overhead. The benches were placed very closely

together, and once everyone had seated himself, and someone in the middle of the crowd wanted to get out, then everyone seated near him would have to get up, go out into the aisle, before he could get out.

As in all Chinese drama, usually the crowd of spectators are more interesting than the drama itself. At frequent intervals the din and noise of people rumbling and conversing drowned out what was going on, on the stage. Cigarette men and tea men walked up and down the aisle selling their wares. Old men coughing loudly would spit on the floor with a loud sound, and then smear the expectoration with the feet, leaving a clear wet spot where it once was.

As in all large Chinese crowd, particularly in this section, the odor of unwashed clothes and bodies are apparent. I have been told that many of the Chinese do not take a bath except when they are first born, then when they are married, and then again at their death when their bodies are washed before burial. Perhaps this is a tall-tale, but judging from the appearances of many, there seems to be a little truth in the story.

The dramas, as presented here, is no different from the ones we see back home, as far as the acting is concerned. Chinese drama is so stylized, that if you see one, you will have seen them all. There is but one way to portray grief, one way to portray comedy, one way to portray action. Down through the ages there is but very little change, if any, in the way of walking across the stage, the manner to sit down, and the way to come onto the stage. Although I'm no authority on Chinese music it seems to me that during the years there has come a change in the tempo and rhythm of the Chinese operatic music. This change is only slight, but clearly discernible, and I think, a light improvement over the old style classical music.

One of the main faults of the Chinese opera, I think, is the leisurely pace of the action, and occasionally the great length in which a small situation is stretched out, and the long, continuous singing. To most people who are used to quick staccato action, the first impression of an old drama comes as a long drawn out bore, after the first few moments of excitement when one sees anything different for the first time. Then there is the monotony of the music which makes every sentence, phrase sound the same. The reason for this can easily be explained. As there is a certain style in portraying a mood or emotion, so there is a certain way of singing a song. A happy song is sung in a certain tune; a sad song is sung in a certain tune; and a love song is sung in a certain tune. The words of each song are different, of course, but the tune of a certain type of a song is always the same.

Now if a person has seen a drama in which the different basic emotions are portrayed, he will have heard all the different types

of songs. If he goes to another drama more or less similar to the one he has just seen, then he will have to sit through a play more or less similar to the previous one.

Plays last about five hours which is the ordinary length of most Cantonese plays. In the Kunming region, because of lack of facilities, and also because of the scarcity of Cantonese, the play is cut down to three hours. In a way this is an improvement, for naturally, in the cutting down, most of the very long songs and scenes are completely eliminated.

The play we saw that night was the first one I saw since I've been in China. It was the fifth chapter of a play entitled "The Prince of the Barbarous Country." and like most Chinese dramas, it deals with the once upon a time when kingdoms and dynasties ruled the "Middle Kingdom."

The provincial play, as presented here, is slightly different from the Cantonese plays. All the singing and talking are presented in Mandarin, and the plays are short, about an hour long, and during the course of the evening, about three or four plays are presented at one time.

Usually not more than three or four characters are involved in the presentation of a short play, and in most cases not more than two are on the stage during the whole length of the play.

Just several weeks ago we attended a drama presented here on the post. It was a series of four short plays. One of them was a sad play; one of them was a love story, one was a drama of conflict. In this three hour period, we saw the variety of plays which are usually presented when the occasion arises to put on a demonstration. All ranges of emotion and feeling were demonstrated against a stark background of music, and scenery which consisted of nothing more than a couple of chairs and a table. Thus the drama of the ages flits across the stage and will probably go on, unchanged, as always in the future. But so much for that.

Another little item which may interest you are the poor desolate beggars who obtain money by a very unique manner. The amount of beggars in the vicinity is extremely small, in view of the wide scale poverty of this region. Once in a while, we see a poor thin man - or woman who comes right out and begs in the ordinary manner. In most other cases the technique is more unique. I ran across many cases in the streets of Kunming of this sort. Usually we see several people, ragged and dirty, with a hungry hollow look in their eyes. Sometimes they will be muttering incoherent sounds or muttering audibly in a sad dreary way. Next to where they sit, right on



10. 1. 1971

the sidewalk, written in chalk, will be a story of desolation and tragedy that have befallen upon these peoples. Very few of the passer-bys show any degree of sympathy. Many will stop and look and read the written characters leisurely, then shoot a quick glance at the group lying or sitting on the sidewalk, and then just as quickly go away.

Another interesting scene is the sidewalk fortune tellers. For a sum, ranging from a mere pittance to a large amount of money, a person can listen to his past, present and future and know about health, love, fortune and any other subject. Many times I am tempted to pay something just to listen out of curiosity, and the only thing that detained me is that I still cannot understand what the man is saying without the aid of an interpreter.

One thing ^{that} did not change is my movie habit. Although I used to be a terrific movie fan, the life in the Army has made me even more so. See an average of at least five movies a week, three in camp and two in the city. Only after almost two years in China, I am finally catching up with the shows which I would ordinarily have seen back in civilian life.

The theaters are, of course, not so elaborate or modern as those back home, but all things considered, are fairly comfortable. I guess I must have mentioned to you in one of my previous letters about the difficulty in getting a ticket for the show. It is no a case of first come, first serve, but the first to shove to the head of the line, the first to get. You will never see such shoving or pushing in your life. In most cases in order to get into a theater, a person will have to buy a ticket through the black market, which in most cases, mean paying from two to three times the usual amount for a seat. Strange, though, over here balcony seats are worth more, and for what particular reason, I do not know for sure.

The movies are not continuous, but are shown complete- at two hour shifts. I guess it's an old Chinese custom, but the movie fans have a annoying habit of coming in late, after the lights are out, and usually the first twenty minutes of the film are lost to the audience by the noise of people looking for seats in the dark, & the constant pushing and squeezing into the aisle by everyone. Another annoying habit is the bringing of small tots and babies into the show. No need to mention that they have an uncanny ability to bawl and cry at the most interesting moment of the film. Still another thing, the audience talk and jabber like a group of chattering parrots.

July 7 was a Chinese holiday. It was the end of the 8th year of the Sino-Japanese war. We had to work half a day that day, but in the middle of the afternoon another friend and I decided to go into town. It just happened that we did not get a ride all the way into town, and we had to walk almost an hour. Usually we go to town on the main road and enter the city from the front. This holiday, we entered the city from the rear, and it was a strange experience, insofar as sightseeing is concerned.

We came into the city without being conscious of it. One moment we were on the outskirts, and before we knew it, houses and streets came into view, and we were in a part of the city which I never had occasion to visit before. In this part of the city we came across many churches and places of worship.

The first thing that hit our eyes was the number of flags displayed everywhere. As far as the eye can see, the Chinese National flag hung from every window ledge, a stream of red, white and blue. The crowd swarmed all over the streets and foot traffic was slowed down to a snail's pace. There was to be a parade in town, we were told, and already on the main streets of the city, spectators were lining up three deep to wait for it to start. It was my intention to watch the parade, but my companion wanted to go to a movie, so to the movie we went, although I would have much preferred to see the parade. So thus, in this way, we spent a National Holiday over here.

Not being by habit a wanderlust, I nevertheless, found myself taking a trip not too long ago. I visited a Rest Camp located up in the mountains about several hours time from camp. We had to go by train. This was my first train ride in China, and it was quite an experience. I rode six days on a train in India, and it was an experience which I would not like to go through again. I have never ridden a train in China for this length of period, so could not make any comparison at all. However, if this one day trip is any indication, then I am sure that I would not care to spend any length of time in ~~the~~.

On the morning of trip we all gathered at the train station at the precise time the train was to go. Even on a train schedule "Chinese time" seems to take precedence, and the train started a quarter of an hour late. It ran at a snail's pace, in comparison to the fast moving ones back home.

This train was reserved especially for Americans, so before we boarded it, it was completely empty. Toward the end of the trip it was an entirely story, as you will see later on. The two cars reserved for us were nothing more than just plain box cars, but over here, they are considered what may appropriately be called "pullmans." Benches run parallel to the walls of the car on both sides, and one long bench is placed in the middle. Windows are paneless. A contraction similar to a small sliding door performs the task of having or not having a window in the cars. A strong steady pull on the sliding panel will reveal a large open space on the wall, and one does not have to know the 64.00 question to know that this is a window. This window is large and spacious, and one can look out and see as far as the eyes can travel.

I was especially eager for the train to get going, for I have read an article in the China Latern, about how interesting the trip was, about the beautiful scenery one will encounter. The trip later proved to be an interesting one, not because of the scenery, but because of what I saw during the course of the

trip which will linger in my memory for a long time, as a scene so typical of China, especially of this part of the country.

Even before the trip started the civilians were trying like mad to get on the train, to go at least part ^{way} toward their destination, if not all the way. Many of the civilians were very well dressed; some were ragged and carried large quantities of wares and merchandise in wicker baskets. They swarmed around like bees in a hive, but at every entrance to the cars they were firmly repulsed by the car attendants. However, a couple managed to get in by some clever way and they rode for three-fourths of the way before they got off.

The train pulled out feebly like an old woman gathering her last strength, but it gained little momentum as it went on. We cleared the outskirts of the city, and came into a wide expanse of rice fields. These fields are everywhere as far as the eye can see. Take away the rice fields and all that is left will brown earth, mud huts, mountains and hills. At rare intervals we can see a large corn field growing, the green stalks sturdy and strong in the sunlight. As I watch these endless miles of green fields rolling continuously onwards, I cannot help but get a feeling that everything here, no matter how important, is submersed by the power of the land, the "good earth" as is so popularly called.

If it isn't for the land and the crops, the people will have nothing to look forward to, and of course, nothing to do.

We crossed several trains coming from the opposite direction. To say that the people were packed like sardines is putting it mildly. They sat on top of the trains, hanging precariously along the sides, the back, the front. Every crack and crevice which could accommodate a body had at least one, more often two. Children, fruits, vegetables, and a wide variety of commodities overflowed everywhere. The longer the train stopped at a station the more people got in. They climbed in from the outside windows, from the back, from the front, and loud arguments ensued when occupant refused to allow newcomer to squeeze into the space which he had fought so strenuously to obtain.

It was like watching an interesting comedy to see the crowd clanking into the train, pushed out of the train, fighting like mad to protect the little space acquired for the journey. Perhaps it is a habit over here, I don't know for sure, but the people seem to relish in public brawls and arguments. They love to create a loud squall and center attention on themselves and then wait for the middle man to come forward and settle everything, so that nobody on either side would lose face.

These public arguments are ^{of} very frequent occurrence in China. I have seen them take place in public theaters, in the streets, in restaurants, and on the trains. The Chinese themselves seem to think nothing of it, but whenever something like this takes place, well, it becomes a field day for all the GI's, and they crowd around as interested spectators.

On our particular train, for instance, the same thing took place. However, whenever it stopped the crowd would rush toward us, many trying desperately to get a free ride, others coming up to the sides of the car selling fresh peaches, hot boiled eggs, peanuts, and cigarettes.

Because American personnel were inside the cars, Chinese civilians were not allowed to share the cars, since they were reserved. So what they did was to climb on top of the main engine, into the coal car. This was all done so quickly, so spontaneously that one does not become conscious of it until it was all over. But we had a very firm conductor on this train. No sooner had they got on than they were jerked off just as quickly,

And believe me, it was not an easy job to make the people come down, once they are firmly entrenched, we might say, in their individual spot. More often than not, they have to be pushed down, or else yanked down very roughly.

However, soon we were on our way again. The last few stations we stopped at were not as bad as the first few where we stopped. We cut across more and more rice fields. We were slowly gaining altitude. Far below we saw a huge blue lake which snakes around the foot of numerous hills. The train circled onwards like a crawling caterpillar. Now we began to see a little more trees.

Most of the hills in this region are as bare as the domes of the middle aged man who sit in the first row of the burlesque house. So it is very rare that one can see trees in any great quantity.

We passed many small villages and towns on the way. And several small railroad stations. After an almost three hour trip we transferred to a bus which took an additional half an hour to take us to the camp.

In some ways now that we got here, we feel a slight disappointment. Perhaps we expected too much of a vacation spot. True, there are the tennis court, a big lake to swim and go boating in, a good size basketball court, and a wide expanse of water and land for the sport enthusiast to wander around in. A person can stay here for a day or two and have a good time, but it is not a place which a person would be reluctant to leave.

My friend and I spent the whole day fishing. Result: 3 small smelts. However, it was good to breathe the clean open sea breeze, although it was a gray dreary day. The trip back home took 2 hours instead of three. We came back not too refreshed, but none the worse.

But enough of all this. I'm afraid I've rambled on more than I should. And have taken up too much of your time by this

heterogeneous assortment of scenes and sights in China. However, I feel that when this war is over and all the GI's go back home, the impression they have of China will not be one they will remember as favorable. They have been here, they have seen, and of course, will consider themselves as some sort of authority of this country.

The filth and poverty they have seen will linger in their memories. All the unfavorable manifestations of a country at war, such as the wide scale black market, thievery, fantastic prices of ordinary articles will recall incidents which many would like to forget rather than remember. The calmness and slowness of the people as a whole is interpreted as dullness and inability to adapt themselves to modern ways and means.

Yet there must be another side of China which we all have read and heard about, the land of the scholars, the fine arts, the silks, but which many of us had not yet had the chance to see.

Perhaps after the war even the "Tobacco Road" of China may experience many changes which will no doubt have a great effect in the future of these peoples. For it cannot be said that people who never had a chance or the opportunity to study or learn will not be able to learn, or that they will not be able to advance forward. It may take time, but already, it can safely be said, the influence of the Western World is having its effect in a once backward, desolate poor region. Fifty years from now Kunming will be greatly changed for the better, and the sons and daughters of the men and women who walk the streets today will on the whole be better off than their fathers and mothers.

Perhaps before this war is over many of us will have an opportunity to see other sections of China. In this way we may get a more fuller and more accurate picture of the country as a whole.

Must stop now or else I may keep going forever.

Until later, and am most anxious to know the latest from you.
Until then, so long.

Best,

Jon

COMMUNIST PARTY, DISTRICT 13

I HEREBY APPLY FOR ENROLLMENT IN THE RANKS OF THE
COMMUNIST PARTY. I WILL LOYALLY FIGHT FOR ITS
AIMS IN LINE WITH ITS ESTABLISHED TACTICS AND WILL
ACCEPT ALL ITS DECISIONS AS MY GUIDE.

Proposed by

Signature of applicant

Unit.....

Section.....

Accepted by

Membership Committee of Unit.....

Section.....

District.....

Date.....

Signature.....

NOTE: Application fee: 60c for employed; 20c for unemployed.



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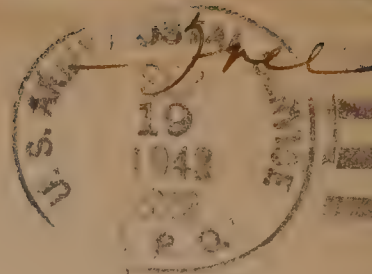
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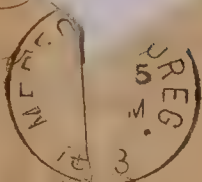
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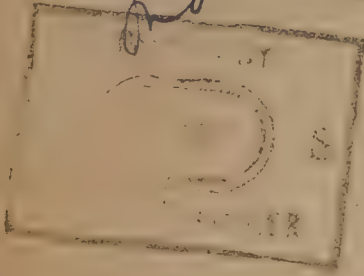


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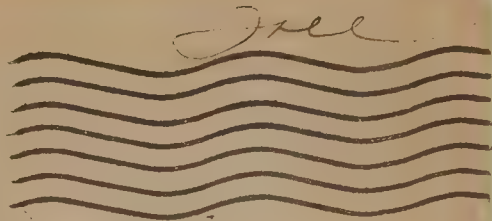
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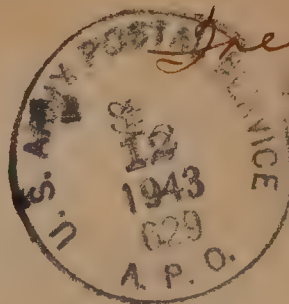
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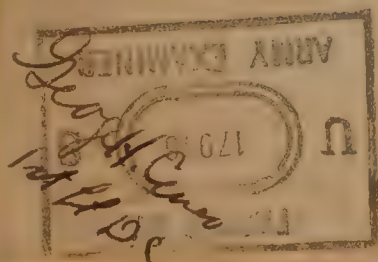


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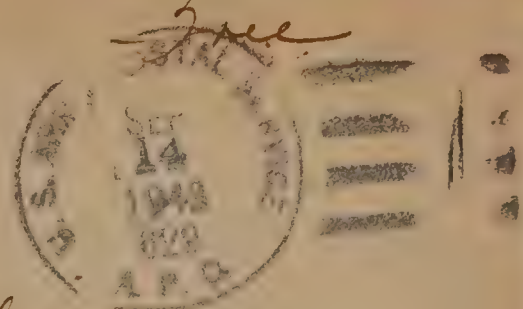


Chinese
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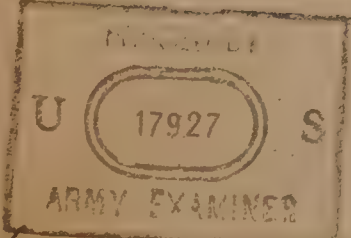
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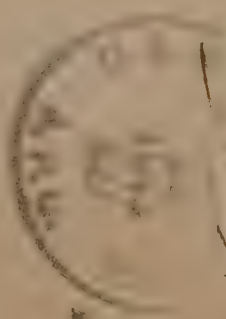
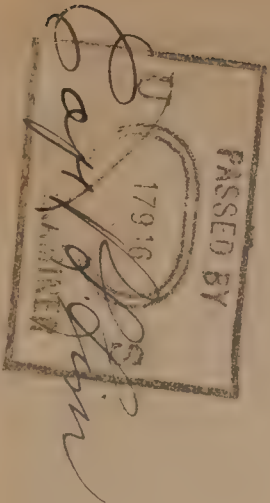
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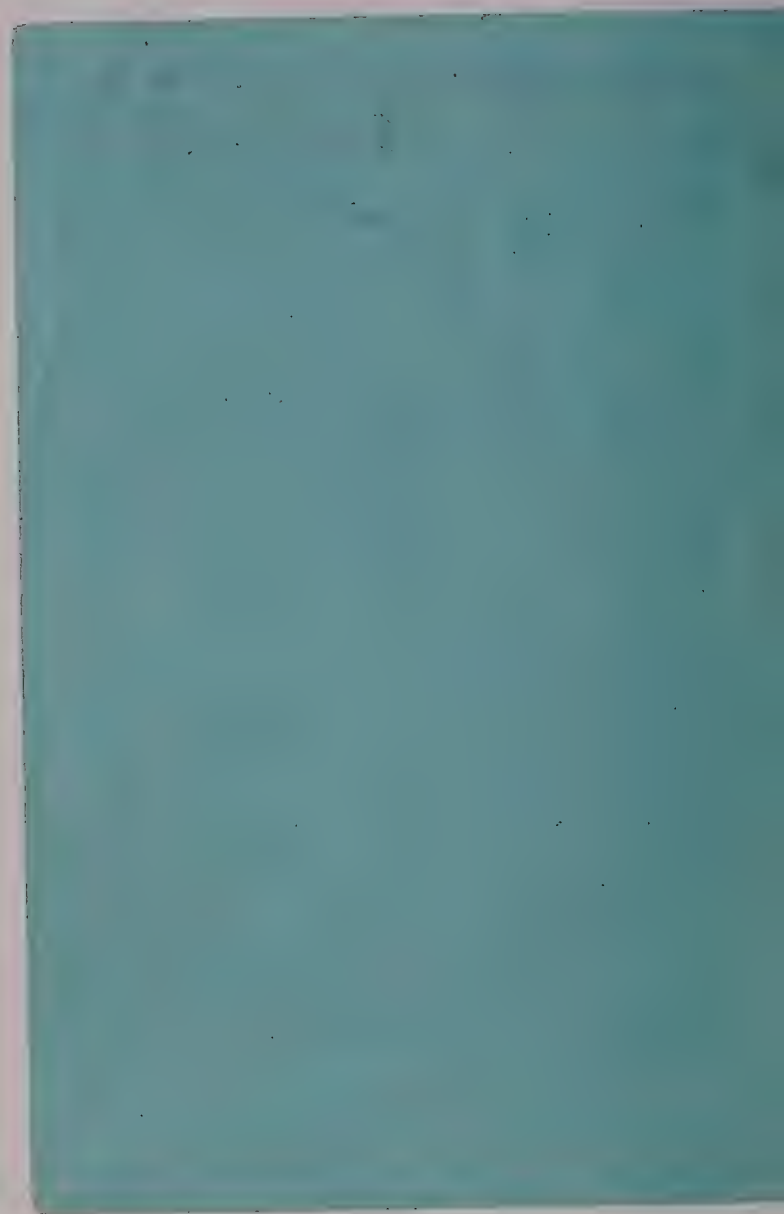
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*Chinest
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Berkeley, California







Communist Party of the U. S. A.
(Section of the Communist International)

Membership Book No. 17726

for
Name Henry St John

Date Admitted to Communist Party 4/34

Entered Revolutionary Movement

District 10 City At Large

Section Shop or Street Nucleus

Signature of Member (in ink)

This Book was issued on 7/7/35 (date)



Signature of District Organizer and Party Seal

No Party Membership Book Valid Unless It Has
Party Seal Stamped On

Issued by the Central Committee, C.P.U.S.A.

Membership Dues for 1935

January

DUES 75¢	DUES STAMP 75¢	DUES STAMP 75¢	DUES STAMP 75¢	DUES STAMP 75¢
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75¢ for Communist Party of Germany

February

DUES STAMP 75¢	DUES STAMP 75¢	DUES STAMP 10¢	DUES STAMP 10¢
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10¢ for Communist Party of Germany

March

DUES STAMP 10¢	DUES STAMP 10¢	DUES STAMP 10¢	DUES STAMP 10¢
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April

DUES STAMP 10¢	DUES STAMP 10¢	DUES STAMP 10¢	DUES STAMP 10¢	DUES STAMP 10¢
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May

DUES STAMP 10¢	DUES STAMP 10¢	DUES STAMP 10¢	DUES STAMP 10¢
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June

DUES STAMP 75¢	DUES STAMP 75¢	DUES STAMP 75¢	DUES STAMP 75¢
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Membership Dues for 1935

July	27	28	29	30	31
August	32	33	34	35	
September	36	37	38	39	
October	40	41	42	43	44
November	45	46	47	48	
December	49	50	51	52	

Assessment Stamps

Assessment Stamps

T r a n s f e r s

Granted from

Dis. . . . Sec. . . . Unit . . .

Date

Unit, Sec., Dis. Organizer
Signature (Seal)

Dis. . . . Sec. . . . Unit . . .

Date

Unit, Sec., Dis. Organizer
Signature (Seal)

Dis. . . . Sec. . . . Unit . . .

Date

Unit, Sec., Dis. Organizer
Signature (Seal)

Dis. . . . Sec. . . . Unit . . .

Date

Unit, Sec., Dis. Organizer
Signature (Seal)

Accepted to

Dis. . . . Sec. . . . Unit . . .

Date

Unit, Sec., Dis. Organizer
Signature (Seal)

Dis. . . . Sec. . . . Unit . . .

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Unit, Sec., Dis. Organizer
Signature (Seal)

Dis. . . Sec. . . Unit . . .

Date

Unit, Sec., Dis. Organizer
Signature (Seal)

**EXTRACTS FROM THE RULES AND BY-
LAWS OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY
OF U. S. A.**

MEMBERSHIP

A member of the Party can be every person from the age of 18 up who accepts the program and rules of the Communist International, and of the Communist Party of the U.S.A., who becomes a member of a basic unit of the Party, who is active in this organization, who subordinates himself to all decisions of the Communist International and the Communist Party, and regularly pays his membership dues.

The question of acceptance must first be discussed by the shop nucleus, or street nucleus of the Party, and the application must be accepted by a vote of the membership of the nucleus to which application is made. The membership books are issued by the District Committees.

TRANSFERS

Members who change their place of work, or in case they are members of a street nucleus, their place of residence, must secure and have recorded in the Party membership book a transfer from the Party nucleus in which they have held membership, and they must present this record to the nucleus to which they are transferred.

If the member transfers from one section to another this shall be recorded in his membership book and in addition a transfer card shall be sent through the District Committee.

If the member transfers from one district to another, this shall be recorded in the membership book, and in addition a transfer card shall be sent through the Central Committee.

Members of the Party who desire to leave the country must obtain the permission of the Central Committee of the Party.

Every member of the Party who is eligible must become a member of the union of his trade.

STRUCTURE OF THE PARTY

The Communist Party of the U.S.A. like all the sections of the Comintern is built upon the principles of democratic centralism. These principles are:

a) Election of all leading committees of the Party from the basic units to the highest committees (by general meetings of Party members, conferences, conventions).

b) Periodical reports by every leading Party committee are to be made to its Party organizations.

c) Decisions of higher Party committees to be obligatory for the lower bodies. (Any Party organization whose activities extend over a certain area is superior to those Party organizations whose activities are limited only to parts of this area).

d) The absolute duty of the lower organizations and all members of the given Party organizations to carry out the decisions of the higher Party committees.

Party questions are to be discussed by the members of the Party and by the Party organizations until such time as a decision is taken upon them by the competent Party committees or organizations. After a decision has been taken by the Congress of the Communist International, by the convention of the Communist Party, or by leading committees of the Comintern and the Communist Party, these decisions must be unreservedly carried out even if a part of the Party membership, or of the local Party organizations are in disagreement with it.

e) All Party organizations have full initiative and right to decide on local questions within the limits of the general Party policies and decisions.

The highest leading organ of each organization is the general membership meeting, the conference, or the Party convention.

Scheme of organization and election of respective body committees is as follows:

Factory or street nucleus—Membership meeting elects Nucleus Party.

Section Convention—composed of delegates from Street and Shop Nuclei elects Section Committee.

District Convention—composed of delegates from Section Conventions (and in some cases direct from important Shop Nuclei) elects District Committee.

National Convention—composed of delegates from District Conventions—elects Central Committee.

PARTY NUCLEUS

The basic unit of the Communist Party organization is the nucleus in the place of employment (factories, workshops, mines, ships, offices, stores, agricultural enterprises, etc.) which unites all the Party members employed in the given enterprise.

The shop nucleus consists of at least three members. Newly organized nuclei must be endorsed by the leading committee of the section in which the nuclei are organized.

Party members who cannot belong to a shop nucleus because of their profession (professionals, housewives, etc.) or who cannot be immediately affiliated to a shop nucleus shall join temporarily the street nucleus in the section of the city in which they reside or work, until it shall be possible to organize a shop nucleus in the factory.

The nucleus is the organization through which the Party is closely connected with the toiling masses in the place where they work, in the place where they live, with the poor farmers, and national minorities (Negroes and colonial peoples) for the organization of the struggle of the masses.

The leading committee of the nucleus, the nucleus bureau, is to be elected at the membership meeting of the nucleus, and is to consist of three to five members, depending upon the size of the nucleus. The nucleus bureau shall be elected for a period of six

months, and is to make a complete report on its work to the full meeting of the nucleus at least twice during this period.

The nucleus buro meets weekly, plans the activities for the nucleus for the given week, and assigns tasks to all nucleus members for a week. The nucleus buro draws up a plan of work for the nucleus, which is discussed and adopted by the members of the nucleus, outlining the tasks of the nucleus in the given factory or territory. The nucleus buro makes decisions that are binding on the individual members of the nucleus, but which are subject to review by the membership meeting of the nucleus.

The nucleus buro elects an organizer (political leader) and divides the work of the buro (agitprop, financial, Daily Worker, literature, etc.). The organizer of the nucleus must be an active Party member of not less than six months, and must be approved by the higher committee (section committee).

PARTY DISCIPLINE

The strictest Party discipline is the most solemn duty of all Party members and all Party organizations. The decisions of the Communist International and of all the leading bodies of the Party must be promptly carried out. There shall be complete freedom of discussion of all controversial questions within the Party until a decision has been made by the leading bodies, after which discussion

must cease and the decision must be carried out.

Breaches of Party discipline by individual members, financial irregularities, as well as any conduct or action detrimental to the Party's prestige and influence among the working masses and harmful to the best interests of the Party, may be punished by criticism, censure, public censure, removal from all responsible posts, or by expulsion from the Party. Breaches of discipline by Party committee may be punished by removal of the committee by the next higher Party committee.

Charges against individual members may be made either in the nuclei of the Party, or in and by any leading committee or Control Commission of the Party. Charges arising in fractions must be submitted to the competent Party organization. Disciplinary actions of the nuclei must be reported to the Section Committee. Disciplinary actions of the Section Committee (including actions of nuclei approved by them) must be reported promptly to the District Committee.

Decisions affecting the expulsion of Party members take effect only upon the approval of the District Committee. The Central Control Commission, however, must be informed about all disciplinary cases, and especially about the expulsions. The Central Organ of the Party reports on disciplinary decisions only upon recommendation of Central Control Commission.

The member punished may appeal to the next higher Party Committee, then to Central Control

Commission, then C.C.C.I. Pending the appeal the decision remains valid. Appeals can be made only by the punished members themselves, or by a Party organization on their behalf.

A leading committee of the Party can remove one of its members only with the approval of the next higher committee.

FRACTIONS

In all non-Party mass organizations (trade unions, factory committees, cooperatives, fraternal organizations, etc.) where there are at least two Communists, a Communist fraction must be organized for the purpose of increasing the influence of the Party in applying its policy.

The fractions are organs of the Party within non-Party organizations. They are not independent, full authorized Party organizations, but are subordinate to the corresponding local and national Party committees.

If questions are discussed by a Party committee which concern a fraction, the committee shall invite a representative of the fraction concerned, who shall attend the meeting of the committee in an advisory capacity.

For current work of the fraction, a leading fraction may be elected who, however, must be endorsed by the respective Party committee in the territory in which the fraction operates. The leading fraction is responsible for its activities to the fraction and

to the Party committee

Candidates for all important positions in the organization in which the fractions are working are selected by the fraction, and must be approved by the Party committee for the territory.

Questions which come up for decision in the organization in which a fraction is working must be discussed in advance in the meeting of the fraction, or by its leading fraction. On every question in which a decision is reached in the fraction, at a decision made by the leading fraction, the fraction members must act unanimously in the meeting of the organization and vote together solidly. Members who break this rule are subject to disciplinary measures by the Party.

PARTY DUES

1. Each applicant for membership shall pay an initiation fee of \$0. (unemployed 10c), which shall be receipted for by an Initiation Stamp furnished by the C.C. Fifty per cent of the sum of the Initiation Stamp shall go to the National Office and 50 per cent to the District Office.

2. Each member shall pay dues weekly approximating 2% of his earnings, which shall be receipted for by dues stamps issued by the Central Committee. Dues Stamps shall be issued in the categories as follows:

Unemployed members pay 2c per week

All members receiving weekly wages

\$15 per week or less including themselves and

working farmers) shall pay 10c dues weekly.

Over \$15 and up to \$25—25c.

Over \$25 and up to \$30—50c.

Over \$30 and up to \$40—75c.

Over \$40 and up to \$50—\$1.00
above \$50.00.

Members receiving over \$50 per week wages, shall pay in addition to the regular \$1.00 per week dues, additional dues (special tax) at the rate of 50c for each \$5.00 (or fraction) of their weekly earnings above \$50.00.

3. The dues are proportioned as follows:

40% to the units.

15% to the sections.

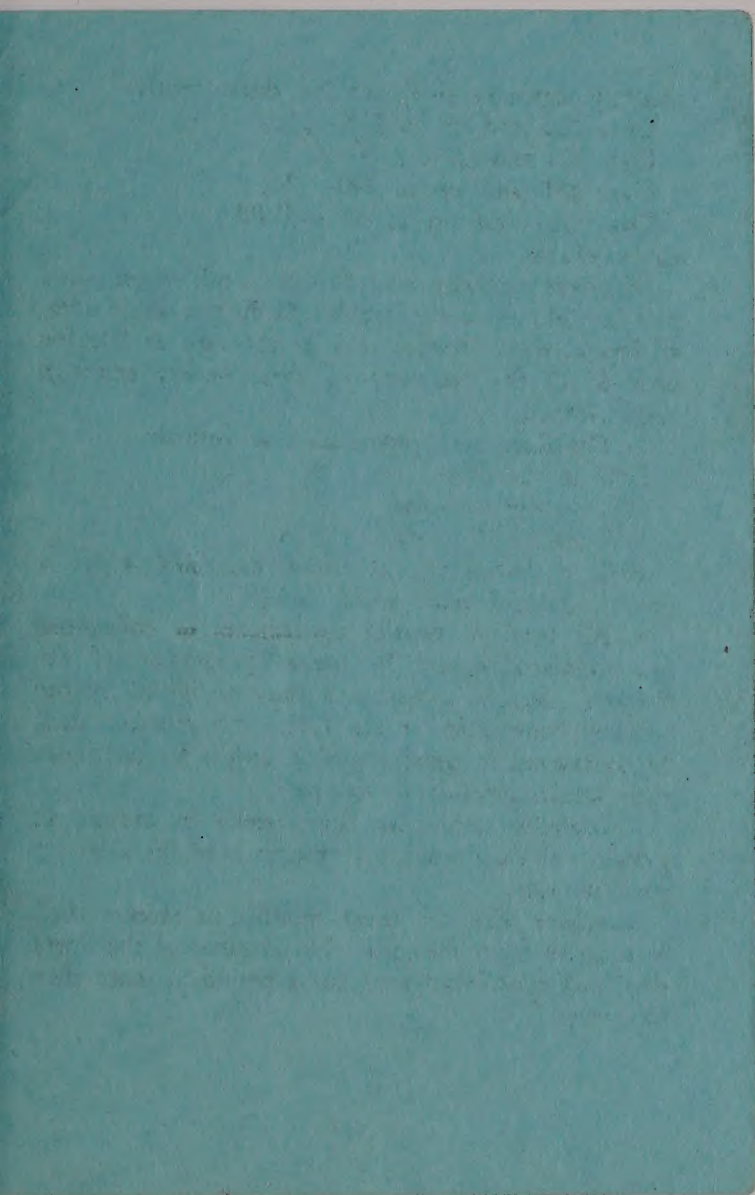
15% to the districts.

30% to the center, of which one-third is for a special national trade union fund.

4. All local or district assessments or collections are prohibited except by special permission of the Polcom. Special assessments may be levied by the national convention or the C.C. No member shall be considered in good standing unless he purchases such special assessment stamps.

5. Members who are four weeks in arrears in payment of dues cease to be members of the Party in good standing.

Members who are three months in arrears shall be stricken from the rolls. No member of the Party shall pay dues in advance for a period of more than six weeks.





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